ST. JUDE'S

'MY NAME IS SIMEON MACQUITTRICK.'

[See page 2

ST. JUDE'S

BY

IAN MACLAREN

AUTHOR OF 'BESIDE THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH,' ETC., ETC.

WITH ELEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HAROLD COPPING

LONDON

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

4 BOUVERIE STREET; & 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

1907

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INTRODUCTORY

THE WISDOM OF LOVE

I

INTRODUCTORY

The Wisdom of Love

IT was the custom in the Free Kirk of Drumtochty that the minister should sit in the pulpit after service till the church had emptied. As the people streamed by on either side, none of them would have spoken to him, or shown any sign of recognition, for that would have been bad manners. But their faces softened into a kindly expression as they passed, and they conveyed as by an atmosphere that they were satisfied with the sermon.

If the minister on his part had descended from the pulpit, and stood below in his gown and bands, shaking hands with all and sundry and making cheery remarks, the congregation

would have been scandalised, and would have felt that he had forgotten the dignity of his office. He was expected to keep his place with gracious solemnity, as a man who had spoken in the name of the Lord, and not to turn the church into a place of conversation. If he rose, and, leaning over the side of the pulpit, asked a mother how it fared with her sick daughter, or stretched out his hand to bid a young man welcome after years of absence from the glen, this rare act was invested with special kindliness, and the recipients, together with their friends, were deeply impressed.

When old Bell Robb, who brought up the tail of the procession, used to drag a little in the passage with simple art, arranging her well-worn shawl or replacing the peppermint-leaves in her Bible, in order that she might get a shake of the minister's hand, no one grudged her his word of good cheer, for they knew what a faithful soul she was, and how kind she was to blind Marjorie. And if the

minister had a message for Bell to carry home to Marjorie, and Bell boasted that she never went empty-handed, the glen was well content, for no one in its length and breadth had suffered so much as Marjorie, and none was so full of peace.

Donald Menzies would sometimes boldly stand at the pulpit-foot upon occasion till the minister descended, but those were days in which his soul had come out of prison, and he rejoiced upon his high places. Otherwise they departed quietly from the House of God. Then the minister went up through the silent church to his little vestry, and it was his custom to turn at the door and look down the church to the pulpit, imagining the people again in their pews, and blessing in his heart the good men and women who were now making their way by country roads to their distant homes.

To-day John Carmichael sits in the pulpit with his head bent and buried in his hands, for he has been deeply humbled. When he was

appointed to the Free Kirk he knew that he could not preach, for that had been faithfully impressed upon him in his city assistantship; but it was given him during his first six months, face to face with the critics of the glen, to learn how vast was his incapacity. Unto the end of his ministry he never forgot the hours of travail, as he endeavoured to prepare an exposition and a sermon for the Sabbath service. He read every commentary on the passage which he possessed, and every reference in books of dogma; he hunted literature through for illustrations, and made adventurous voyages into science for analogies. There was no field from which he did not painfully gather, except conventional religious anecdotage, which in even his hours of despair he refused to touch. Brick by brick he built up his house, and then on Sunday it would tumble to pieces in his hands, and present nothing but a heap of disconnected remarks for the consideration of the people.

This morning he had come to a halt trying

to expound the dispute over meat offered to idols in the first epistle to the Corinthians, and he had omitted one head of his sermon and the whole of the practical application—simply because he was nervous and his memory had failed. But he could not conceal from himself that if there had been any real unity in his thinking, and if he had been speaking at first hand, he would not have been so helpless. The people were very patient, and had made no complaint, but there was a limit, and it must have been reached. Besides, it was not honourable or tolerable that a man should undertake the duties of a profession and not be able to discharge them. It was now evident that he could not preach, and it did not seem likely he would ever be able to do so; and as in the Kirk no man can even have the most modest success or the narrowest sphere of labour unless he can produce some sort of sermon, his duty seemed plain. He had not chosen the ministry of his own accord, but had entered it to please one whose kindness he could never

repay; his action had been a service of piety, but it had been a mistake in practice, and one thing only remained for him. During the week he would consult the only person affected by the step and resign his charge.

The people trooping by with nothing but friendly thoughts of him could not guess how bitter a cup their minister was drinking, but the sound of their footsteps fell upon his heart like drops of fire. There were other fields open to him, and he might live to do good work in his day; but his public life had started with a disastrous failure, and as long as he lived he would walk humbly. When the last of the congregation had left, and there was not a sound except a thrush welcoming spring with his cheerful note, and caring not that winter had settled down upon a human soul, Carmichael rose and crept up the forsaken church a broken man.

As he stood in the vestry his chin sunk on his chest, and he resolved to wait there for a little lest a straggler should be loitering about

the manse gate. Someone knocked at the door. It was the elder who, of all the session, was chiefly loved and respected. As soon as Carmichael saw his face he knew as by an instinct why he had come, and what he was going to say. If there was any difficult task in the congregational life requiring both courage and delicacy, it was always laid on Angus Sutherland, and he never failed to acquit himself well. Never had he come on a more unwelcome errand, and Carmichael felt that he must make the course as smooth as possible, for without doubt the elder had been sent to make a just complaint. It required a brave man to come, and Carmichael must also play the man, so he pulled himself together and gave a courteous, and so far as he could, a cheerful welcome to the good elder.

'It is good weather that we are having, sir,' began Angus, speaking English with the soft Gaelic accent, for he was a West Highlander who had settled in the glen; 'it is good to see

the beginning of spring. We will be hoping that the Spirit of God may make spring in our own hearts, and then we shall also be lifting up our voices. But I must not be detaining you, when you will be very tired with your work, and be needing rest. Maybe I should not be troubling you at all at this time, but I have been sent by the elders with a message, not because I am better than my brethren, but only because it is my fortune to be a little older.'

Carmichael knew then that he was right in his anticipation, and he asked Angus to say what was given him frankly, and to make no delay. And he tried to speak gently and humbly, for in truth his own conscience was with the elders and, as he believed, their embassy.

'You may not know, sir, but I will be telling you, that after the service is over, and the people have gone out from the House of God, the elders speak together below the big beech-tree, and their speech will be about the worship

and the sermon. You are not to think,' added Angus with a gracious smile, 'that they will be criticising what is said, or hardening their heart against the counsel of the Lord declared by the mouth of His servant. Oh, no, we will rather be storing up the bread of God, that we may eat thereof during the days of the week, and have strength for the way.'

Carmichael assured Angus that he knew how fair-minded and kind-hearted the elders were, both in word and deed. And he braced himself for what was coming.

'This morning,' continued Angus, 'the elders were all there, and when we looked at one another's faces we were judging that the same thing will be in our hearts. It was with us for weeks, and it was growing, and to-day it came to speech. We knew that we were not meeting together as the session, and it is not business I will be coming with; we met as the elders of the flock, and it is as your friend that I am here, in much humility. But it is not easy for this man to say what has been laid upon him.'

Carmichael was sorry for him, and signed to him to go on.

'You were chosen, I will be reminding you,' said Angus, with a gracious expression on his face, 'by the goodwill of all the people; and it was a very proud day when the clerk of the Presbytery stood in his place and said that the call would be left with the elders, so that all the people might be having the opportunity of signing it, and I stood up and replied to the reverend gentleman, "It is not necessary; they have all signed." Oh, yes, and so they had, every man and every woman that was upon the roll. And the young people, they had written their names, too, upon the paper of adherence, every one above sixteen years of age. And the very children would be wishing that day that they had something to sign, for the hearts of the people had gone out towards you, and there was one voice in every mouth: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."'

Carmichael gave Angus to understand that

CARMICHAEL BRACED HIMSELF FOR WHAT WAS COMING.

he would never forget those things while he lived, and he prayed God that he might be a better man for the people's confidence in him. But his heart was beginning to break as he thought of their bitter disappointment, and the trust which had failed in his hands.

'It is three months since you entered upon your ministry among us, and you will not be angry with me if I am saying to you that you are very young to have so heavy a weight upon you, for there is no burden like the burden of souls. And the elders will be noticing, and so will all the people, for they are not without understanding in Drumtochty, that you are giving yourself with all your mind and all your heart unto the work of the Lord. The people are seeing that whatsoever talents the Lord has been pleased to give are laid out at usury, and they are judging you very faithful, both in your study and in their homes. But,' softening his voice till it was like a whisper at eventide, 'you are very young, and the ministry of the Lord is very arduous.'

Amid all his suffering Carmichael could not help admiring the courtesy and consideration with which Angus presented the petition of the session, which he was perfectly certain by this time was a suggestion that he should resign. He asked Angus to declare at once all that was in his mind.

'So the elders considered that the full time had come for their saying something to you, and I was charged by them all to wait upon you in this place, and to say unto you, on behalf of the elders of the flock and all the flock which is under your care' (and now it is impossible to imagine the tenderness in his voice), 'that we are all thankful unto God that He sent you to be our minister, and that we are all wondering at the treasures of truth and grace which you will be bringing to us every Sabbath, for we are being fed with the finest of the wheat. Oh, yes, it is not the chaff of empty words, but the white bread of God which is given unto the people, and the very children

will have their portion, and will be saying pleasant words about the minister as they go along the road.'

Carmichael was as one that dreamed, for no man had ever spoken of his preaching after this fashion. This strange thing also happened: while a minute before the manhood in him had been strong, it now began to weaken and fail, and Angus still continued:

'The elders will also be noticing that your words are heavy laden with the greatness of the truth, and that you are sometimes brought to silence, as it has happened unto God's prophets in the ancient time. We will all be wanting to hear everything that the Lord has given unto you, and to lay it past even to the smallest grain in our souls; and so if at any time it appears unto you as if some part of the message has not been given, we would count it a great kindness that you should go over the truth again, and if it would be helping you to meditate for a space we would all be glad to sing a psalm. For we have

plenty of time, and it is good to be in the Kirk of Drumtochty during those days.'

Carmichael was learning that hour that kindness takes all the pride even out of a young man, and turns him into a little child. As he could find no words, and indeed was afraid that he had no voice wherewith to utter them, Angus went on his way without interruption, and came to the end in much peace.

'There is just one other thing that the brethren laid upon me to say, and it was Donald Menzies who would not let me go till I had promised, and you will not be considering it a liberty from the elders. You are never to be troubled in the pulpit, or be thinking about anything but the Word of the Lord and the souls of the people, of which you are the shepherd. We will ask you to remember, when you stand in your place to speak to us in the name of the Lord, that as the smoke goeth up from the homes of the people in the morning, so will their prayers

be ascending for their minister, and as you look down upon us before you begin to speak, maybe you will say to yourself, next Sabbath, "They are all loving me." Oh, yes, and it will be true from the oldest to the youngest: we will all be loving you very much.'

Angus Sutherland was, like all his kind, a very perfect gentleman, and he left immediately, so gently that Carmichael did not hear his going. When the minister passed the garden gate half an hour afterwards there was no man to be seen, but the birds on every branch were in full song, and he marked that the hawthorn had begun to bloom. And that is why John Carmichael remained in the ministry of Jesus Christ, the most patient and most mindful of masters.

A LOCAL INQUISITION

II

A Local Inquisition

HIS first service in St. Jude's Church was over, and Carmichael had broken upon his modest dinner with such appetite as high excitement had left; for it is a fact in the physiology of a minister that if he preaches coldly he eats voraciously, but if his soul has been at a white heat his body is lifted above food. It had been a great change from the little Kirk of Drumtochty, with its congregation of a hundred country people, to the crowd which filled every corner of the floor below and the galleries above in the city church. While the light would that Sunday be streaming into the Highland kirk, and lighting up the honest, healthy faces of the hearers,

the gas had been lit in St. Jude's, for the Glasgow atmosphere was gloomy outside, and when it filtered through painted windows was as darkness inside. There is no loneliness like that of a solitary man in a crowd, and Carmichael missed the company and sympathy of his friends. This mass of city people, with their eager expression, white faces, and suggestion of wealth, who turned their eyes upon him when he began to preach, and seemed to be one huge court of judgment, shadowed his imagination. They were partly his new congregation and partly a Glasgow audience, but there were only two men in the whole church he knew, and even those he had only known for a few months.

When he rose to preach, with the heavy pall of the city's smoke and the city fog encompassing the church, and the glare of the evil-smelling gas lighting up its Gothic recesses, his heart sank and for the moment he lost courage. Was it for this dreary gloom and packed mass of strange people

he had left the sunlight of the glen and the warm atmosphere of true hearts? There were reasons why he had judged it his duty to accept the charge of this West End Glasgow Church, and selfish ambition had certainly not been one, for Carmichael was a man rather of foolish impulses than of far-seeing prudence. He had done many things suddenly which he had regretted continually; and for an instant, as he faced his new environment and before he gave out his text, he wished that by some touch of that fairy wand which we are ever desiring to set our mistakes right, or to give us our impossible desires, he could be spirited away from the city which as a countryman he always hated, back to the glen which he would ever carry in his heart.

While vain regret is threatening to disable him, the people are singing with a great volume of melody:

'Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together;
Unto that place the tribes go up, the tribes of God go thither,'

and his mood changes. After all, the ocean is greater than any river, however picturesque and romantic it be, and no one with a susceptible soul can be indifferent to the unspoken appeal of a multitude of human beings. Old and young of all kinds and conditions, from the captains of industry whose names were famous throughout the world to the young men who had come up from remote villages to push their fortune, together with all kinds of professional men administering justice, relieving suffering, teaching knowledge, were gathered together to hear what the preacher had to say in the name of God. His message would be quickly caught by the keen city intellect, and would pass into the most varied homes and into the widest lives, and there was an opportunity of spiritual power in this city pulpit which the green wilderness could not give.

As he looked upon the sea of faces the depths of Carmichael's nature were stirred, and when his lips were opened he had forgotten everything except the drama of humanity in

its tragedy and in its comedy, and the Evangel of Jesus committed into his hands. He spoke with power, as one touched by the very spirit of his Master, and in the vestry the rulers of the Church referred to his sermon with a gracious and cheering note. He walked home through the gloomy street with a high head, and in his own room, in a way the public might not see, he received the congratulation he valued more than anything else on earth. For Kate was proud of him that day, and she was not slow either in praise or blame as occasion required, being through all circumstances, both dark and bright, a woman of the ancient Highland spirit. She was not to be many years by his side, and their married life was not to be without its shadows, but through the days they were together his wife stood loyally at Carmichael's right hand, and when she was taken he missed many things in his home and heart, but most of all her words of cheer when, in her honest judgment, he had carried himself right knightly in the lists of life.

His nerves were on edge, and although it mattered little that he was interrupted at dinner, for he knew not what he was eating, he was not anxious to see a visitor. If it were another elder come to say kind things, he must receive him courteously, but Carmichael had had enough of praise that day; and if it were a pressman desiring an interview, he would assure him that he had nothing to say, and as a consolation hand him his manuscript to make up a quarter column. But it was neither a city merchant nor a newspaper reporter who was waiting in the study; indeed, one could not have found in the city a more arresting and instructive contrast. In the centre of the room, detached from the bookcase and the writing-table, refusing the use of a chair, and despising the very sight of a couch, stood, isolated and self-contained, the most austere man Carmichael had ever seen, or was ever to meet in his life.

He had met Calvinism in its glory among

Celts, but he had only known sweet-blooded mystics like Donald Menzies or Pharisees converted into saints like Lachlan Campbell, the two Highland elders of Drumtochty. It was another story to be face to face with the inflexible and impenetrable subject of Lowland Calvinism. Whether Calvinism or Catholicism be the more congenial creed for the Celtic nature may be a subject of debate; but when Calvinism takes hold of a Lowland Scot of humble birth and moderate education and intense mind, there is no system which can produce so uncompromising and unrelenting a partisan.

Carmichael always carried in mental photograph the appearance of Simeon MacQuittrick as he faced him that day—his tall, gaunt figure, in which the bones of his body, like those of his creed, were scarcely concealed, his erect and uncompromising attitude, his carefully-brushed, well-worn clothes, his clean-shaven, hard-lined face, his iron-grey hair smoothed down across his forehead, and, above all, his keen, searching, merciless grey eyes. Before

Simeon spoke Carmichael knew that he was antipathetic, and had come to censure; and his very presence, as from the iron dungeon of his creed Simeon looked out on the young light-hearted, optimistic minister of St. Jude's, was like a sudden withering frost upon the gay and generous blossom of spring.

'My name is Simeon MacQuittrick,' began the visitor, 'and I'm a hearer at St. Jude's, altho' I use that name under protest, considering that the calling of kirks after saints is a rag of popery, and judging that the McBriar Memorial, after a faithful Covenanter, would have been more in keeping with the principles of the pure Kirk of Scotland. But we can discuss that matter another day, and I am merely protecting my rights.' As Carmichael only indicated that he had received the protest, and was willing to hear anything else he had to say, Simeon continued:

'Whether I be one of the true Israel of God or only a man who is following the chosen people like a hanger-on from the land

of Egypt is known to God alone, and belongs to His secret things; but I have been a professor of religion and a member of the Kirk for six-and-forty years, since the fast-day at Ecclefechan when that faithful servant of God, Dr. Ebenezer Howison, preached for more than two hours on the words, "Many be called, but few are chosen."' And Carmichael waited in silence for the burden of Simeon's message.

'It was my first intention,' proceeded Simeon, as he fixed Carmichael with his severe gaze, 'to deal wi' the sermon to which we have been listening, and which I will say plainly has not been savoury to the spiritual and understanding souls in the congregation, altho' I make no doubt it has pleasantly tickled the ears of the worldly. But I will pretermit the subject for the present—first, because time would fail us to go into it thoroughly, and second, because I am come to offer a better opportunity.' Carmichael indicated without speech that Simeon should go on to the end.

'Ye will understand, Mr. Carmichael, that

the congregation gathering in your kirk is a mixed multitude, and the maist part are taken up wi' worldly gear and carnal pleasures like dinners, dancing, concerts, and games; they know neither the difference between sound doctrine and unsound nor between the secret signs of saving faith and the outward forms of ordinary religion; as for the sovereignty of the Almighty, whereby one is elected unto light and another left unto damnation, whilk is the very heart o' religion, they know and care nothing. Gin the Lord has indeed given ye a true commission and ye have been ordained not by the layin' on o' hands, whilk I judge to be a matter of kirk order and not needful for the imparting of grace, as the Prelatists contend, but by the inward call of God, it will be your business to pull down every stronghold of lies, and to awaken them that be at ease in Zion with the terrors of the Lord. And ye might begin with the elders who are rich and increased in goods, and who think they have need of nothing. But I have my doubts.' And

the doubts seemed a certainty, but whether they were chiefly about the elders' unspiritual condition or Carmichael's need of a true call Simeon did not plainly indicate.

'I am very sorry, Mr. MacQuittrick'—and Carmichael spoke for the first time—'that you consider the congregation to be in such a discouraging condition, especially after the faithful ministry of my honoured predecessor, but I trust out of such a large number of people that there must be a number of sincere and intelligent Christians.' Which was a bait Simeon could not resist.

'Ye speak according to the Scriptures, Mr. Carmichael, for in the darkest days when Elijah testified against the priests of Baal—and he is sorely needed to-day, for there be many kinds of Baal—there were seven thousand faithful people. Yea, there has always been a remnant; and even in these days, when the multitude that call themselves by the name of the Lord are hankering after organs, and hymns, and soirees, and Arminian doctrine, there be a few

who have kept their garments unspotted, and who mourn over the backslidings of Zion.'

'Well, I hope, Mr. MacQuittrick, that some of the remnant can be found in St. Jude's?' And Carmichael began to enter into the spirit of the situation.

'It doesna' become me to boast, for indeed there are times when I see myself in the court of the Gentiles, ay, and maybe in the outer darkness; but ye will be pleased to know that there are seven men who meet ane night every week to protest against false doctrine, and to search into the experiences o' the soul. Myself and another belong to the faithful remnant of the Scots Kirk, whilk the world call the Cameronians; two have been members wi' the original secession; ane came from the black darkness o' the Established Kirk; and two were brought up in the Free Kirk, and I'll not deny, had a glimmerin' o' light. When the godly minister who has gone to his reward, as we will hope, but the day alone will declare, lifted up his voice in the pulpit of St. Jude's against Sunday

cars, opening the gardens on the Lord's day, singing paraphrases at public worship, the worldly proposals for union with the Voluntaries, the preaching of teetotalism, and the blasphemy of the Higher Critics, we came to this kirk and foregathered here as in a haven of refuge.

'It came to our mind, Mr. Carmichael'—and the representative of the remnant concluded his message—'that it would strengthen your hands to know that ye have some discernin' professors in your kirk, with whom ye could search into the deep things of God whilk might be beyond the depths of youth, and who will try the doctrine which ye may deliver from Sabbath to Sabbath. And we will be gathered together on Thursday night at 272, Water Street, by eight o'clock, to confer with you on the things of the kingdom.'

When Carmichael arrived at the meeting-place of the remnant he had a sense of a spiritual adventure, and when he looked at the seven grey and austere faces, he imagined

himself before the Inquisition. His host—the brand plucked from the burning of the Establishment—shook hands with gravity, and gave him a vacant chair at the table, where before him and on either side sat the elect. After a prayer by an Original Seceder, in which the history of the Scots Kirk from the Reformation and her defections in the present day were treated at considerable length and with great firmness of touch, and some very frank petitions were offered for his own enlightenment, the court was, so to say, constituted, and he was placed at the bar. If Carmichael imagined, which indeed he did not, that this was to be a friendly conference between a few experienced Christians and their young minister, he was very soon undeceived, for the president of the court called upon Simeon's fellow-Covenanter to state the first question.

'It is one, Mr. Carmichael, which goes to the root of things, for he that is right here will be right everywhere; he that goes astray here will end in the bottomless pit of false doctrine.

Whether would ye say, that Christ died upon the cross for the salvation of the whole world, and that therefore a proveesion was made for the pardon of all men gin they should repent and believe, or that He died only for the sins of them whom God hath chosen unto everlasting life, and who therefore shall verily be saved according to the will of God?' And there was a silence that might be heard while the seven waited for the minister's answer.

When Carmichael boldly declared that the Divine love embraced the human race which God had called into being, and that Christ as the Incarnate Saviour of the world had laid down His life, not for a few, but for the race, and that therefore there was freeness of pardon and fulness of grace for all men, and when finally he called God by the name of Father, the inquisitors sighed in unison. They looked like men who had feared the worst, and were not disappointed.

'Arminianism pure and simple,' said one of the favoured children of the Free Kirk,

contrary to the Scriptures and the standards of the Kirk. "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated"; "a strait gate and a narrow way, and few there be that find it." And the end of this deceiving error, which pleases the silly heart, is Universalism—nae difference between the elect and the multitude. But there were ither questions, and our brother Mr. MacCosh will maybe put the second'—although it was evident hope was dying out both for Carmichael and for the inquisitors.

'Do ye believe, Mr. Carmichael, and will ye preach that the offer of the Gospel should be made to all men in the congregation, and that any man who accepts that offer, as he considers, will see the salvation of God; or will ye teach that while the offer is made in general terms to everybody with words such as "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," it is only intended for certain who are already within the covenant of redemption, and that they alone will be enabled by effectual grace to accept it, and that for them alone there is a place at the

marriage-feast? And I am asking this question because there are so-called evangelists going up and down the land offering the invitation of the kingdom unto all and sundry, and forgetting to tell the people, if indeed they know it themselves, that it matters not how freely Christ be offered, and how anxious they may be to take Him, none of them can lift a little finger in His direction unless by the power of the Spirit, and the Spirit is only given to them who have been in the covenant from all eternity.'

Carmichael felt as if he were again making his vows before ordination, and any sense of the ludicrous which was a snare unto him, and had tempted him when he came into the room, was burnt out. He was face to face with a conscientious and thorough-going theology, against whose inhumanity and ungraciousness both his reason and his soul revolted.

'May I in turn put a question to you, sir, and the other brethren, and if you will answer mine I will answer yours. Would you consider

it honest, I will not say kindly, to invite twelve men to come to dinner at your house, all the more if they were poor and starving, and to beseech them to accept your invitation in the most tender terms, while you only intended to have six guests, or shall I say three out of the twelve, and had been careful to make provision for only three? You would despise such a host; and, Mr. MacCosh, will you seriously consider God to be more treacherous and dishonourable than we frail mortals?'

'Very superfeecial,' burst in Simeon; 'there is no question to be answered. Human analogies are deceiving, for nae man can argue from the ways of man to the ways of God, or else ye would soon be expectin' that the Almighty would deal wi' us the same as a father maun deal wi' his bairns, whilk is the spring o' that soul-destroying heresy, the so-called Fatherhood of God. Na, na'—and MacQuittrick's face glowed with dogmatic enthusiasm, in which the thought of his own destiny and that of his fellow-humans was

lost—'He is the Potter and we are the clay. Gin He makes one vessel for glory and another for shame—ay, and even gin He dashes it to pieces, it is within His just richts. Wha are we to complain or to question? Ane oot o' twelve saved would be wonderful mercy, and the eleven would be to the praise of His justice.' And a low hum of assent passed round the room.

'After what has passed, I'm not judging that it will serve ony useful purpose to pit the third question, Mr. MacCosh,' said the brand from the Establishment, 'but it might be as well to complete the investigation. It's a sore trial to think that a man whom we called to be our minister, and who is set over the congregation in spiritual affairs, knows so much of the pure truth, and has fallen into sae mony soul-enticing errors. Oh! this evil day; we have heard wi' our ane ears in this very room, and this very nicht, first Arminianism, and then Morisonianism, the heresy of a Universal Atonement and of a free offer. I'll do Mr.

Carmichael justice in believin' that he is no as yet at ony rate a Socinian, but I'm expecting that he's a Pelagian. Oor last question will settle the point.'

'Is it your judgment, Mr. Carmichael'—and there was a tone of despair in the voice of the president—'that a natural man, and by that I mean a man acting without an experience of effectual and saving grace given only to the elect, can perform any work whatever which would be acceptable to God, or whether it be not true that everything he does is altogether sinful, and that altho' he be bound to attempt good works in the various duties of life, they will all be condemned and be the cause of his greater damnation?' And when, at the close of this carefully-worded piece of furious logic, Carmichael looked round and saw approval on the seven faces, as if their position had been finally stated, his patience gave way.

'Have you'—and he leaned forward and brought his hand down upon the table—'have you any common reason in your minds—I do

not mean the pedantic arguments of theology, but the common-sense of human beings? Have you any blood in your hearts, the blood of men who have been sons, and who are fathers, the feelings of ordinary humanity? Will you say that a mother's love to her son, lasting through the sacrifices of life on to the tender farewell on her deathbed, is not altogether good? That a man toiling and striving to build a home for his wife and children and to keep them in peace and plenty, safe from the storms of life, is not acceptable unto God? That a man giving his life to save a little child from drowning, or to protect his country from her enemies, is not beautiful in the sight of Heaven? That even a heretic, standing by what he believes to be true and losing all his earthly goods for conscience' sake, has not done a holy thing—tell me that?' And Carmichael stretched out his hands to them in the fervour of his youth.

No man answered, and it was not needful, for the minister's human emotion had beaten

upon their iron creed like spray upon the high sea cliffs. But one of them said, 'That completes the list — downright Pelagianism,' and he added gloomily, 'I doubt Socinianism is not far off.'

The court was then dissolved; but before he left the room like a criminal sent to execution, a sudden thought struck Carmichael, and in his turn he asked a question:

'It is quite plain to me, brethren'—for so he called them in Christian courtesy, although it was doubtful if they would have so called him—'that you have suspected me of unsoundness in the faith, and that you have not been altogether unprepared for my answers; I want to ask you something, and I am curious to hear your answer. There are many names attached to the call given to me by the congregation of St. Jude's, and I do not know them all as yet, but I hope soon to have them written on my heart. The people who signed that call declared that they were assured by good information of my piety, prudence, and minis-

terial qualifications, and they promised me all dutiful respect, encouragement, support, and obedience in the Lord. I have those words ever in my memory, for they are a strength to me as I undertake my high work. May I ask, are your names, brethren, upon that call, and if so, why did you sign it?'

As he was speaking, Carmichael noticed that the composure of the seven was shaken, and that a look of uneasiness and even of confusion had come over their faces. He was sure that they had signed, and he also guessed that they had already repented the deed. It seemed to him as if there was some secret to be told, and that they were challenging one another to tell it. And at last, under the weight of his responsibility as president of the court, MacCosh made their confession.

'Ye must understand, Mr. Carmichael, that when your name was put before the congregation we, who have been called more than others to discern the spirits, had no sure word given us either for or against you, and we were in

perplexity of heart. It was not according to our conscience to sign lightly and in ignorance as many do, and we might not forbear signing unless we were prepared to lay our protests with reasons upon the table of the presbytery. We gathered together in this room and wrestled for light, and it seemed to come to us through a word of our brother Simeon MacQuittrick, and I will ask him to mention the sign that we judged that day to be of the Lord, but it may be it came from elsewhere.'

'That very morning,' explained Simeon, with the first shade of diffidence in his manner, 'I was reading in my chamber the Acts of the Apostles, and when I came to the words "send men to Joppa," I was hindered, and I could go no further. The passage was laid upon my soul, and I was convinced that it was the message of God, but concerning whom and concerning what I knew not. But it was ever all the hours of the day, "send men to Joppa."

'That very afternoon I met ane of the

elders, who is liberal in his gifts and full of outward works, but I judge a mere Gallio, and he asked me whether I was ready to sign the call. I answered that I was waiting for the token, and I told him of the words given to me that day. "Well," he said to me in his worldly fashion, "if you will not call a man unless he be at Joppa you may have to wait some time, MacQuittrick; but, by the way, I hear that Mr. Carmichael is staying near Edinburgh just now, and there is a Joppa on the coast next to Portobello."

'He may have been jesting,' sadly continued MacQuittrick, 'and he is a man whose ear has never been opened; but the Almighty chooses whom He will as his messengers, and spake once by Balaam's ass, so I mentioned the matter to the brethren. And when we considered both the word of Acts and the saying of this Gallio we accepted it as a token. So it came to pass that we all signed your call. But it pleases God to allow even the elect to be deceived; behold, are there not false prophets

and lying signs? And it may be ye were not at Joppa.' And when Carmichael declared with joyful emphasis that he had never been at Joppa in his life, MacCosh summed up the moral of the call and of the Conference. 'It was a sign, but it was from Satan.'

A FAITHFUL STEWARD

III

A Faithful Steward

NO one knew him except the minister and the elder of his district; no one spoke to him as he came and went to church except the church officer, who judged him by the standard of regular attendance and regarded him with marked respect; no one missed him when he did not appear in his usual place, except the other people in the pew. Thirty-five years ago he took the sitting next the wall in No. 41, and there he sat at morning and evening service from January to December, except two Sundays in August when he went on a holiday. He was the first to enter the

kirk and the last to leave; he was never absent on the worst winter evening from the Wednesday service, where he had also his own place, and if there was any special service, he was sure to be present. To all the funds he contributed finely-graduated sums, which showed care and conscience, and if there were any extraordinary effort, he subscribed one guinea. No one took a deeper interest in the welfare of St. Jude's, but he never offered any suggestion to the officers of the Church. No one could be a more devout or more intelligent worshipper, but he never wrote a single letter to the minister. When he died the minister missed that faithful figure from its place, and for months Carmichael looked unconsciously for the absent grey head. Quietly he came, quietly he passed; his very name, James Sim, was retiring and unassuming, yet no one in St. Jude's fulfilled his life-trust more honestly or more successfully.

His calling was that of a book-keeper in a large firm, and this office is one by itself, and

NO ONE FULFILLED HIS LIFE-TRUST MORE HONESTLY.

separates a man from his fellows. The other clerks are in the main current of the river, and no one knows in what distant port their ship may land, for they may become the agents of their firm abroad, or even rise to be its rulers. They are men who have varied interests and see much of life. They are in the midst of things and deal with men, but the book-keeper is withdrawn and solitary; he has his own room and his own methods; he does not come into contact with the world, his concern is with documents; so he grows silent, introspective, with a mania for exactness and a hatred of turmoil.

For more than a quarter of a century Sim had been chief book-keeper of the great East Indian house, Rothwell Sellars, Purves & Co., and long ago he grew into his place. At three minutes to nine he entered the outer office, two minutes to nine he disappeared up the iron corkscrew stair, which was the only means of communication with his room, and it was understood that when the clock stood in the

middle of the figure nine he began his day's work. At one o'clock, just when the echo of the gun had died away, he began to come down the stair. There was a corner in an old-fashioned eating-house where he took the same kind of lunch every day of the year, and gave exactly the same tip to the waiter. After luncheon he made a circular walk of twenty minutes round the same streets and arrived in the office at three minutes to two, resuming work exactly at two o'clock. At five he reappeared, and he disappeared through the outer door at two minutes past.

Neither on his entering nor his departure did he speak to the general staff, but he always exchanged a remark on the weather with the chief cashier, and said 'How-do-you-do' to the manager. If by any chance he met a partner, he saluted him with respectful dignity, and he would acknowledge courteously the salutation of the commissionaire at the door. The office timed their watches by his movements, and also gathered the degree of temperature from his

particular topcoat, while every one wished he could brush his hat as smoothly.

An assistant book-keeper sat with him in the mysterious room, but the spell of his environment was on him, and he would tell little of that interior. It was understood that the silence was never broken from nine to one, or from two to five, except by remarks in business cypher; and that on the assistant, during his first week, offering some irrelevant remark on the sensation of the day, Mr. Sim had indicated that as a book-keeper he knew nothing of the matter, and that within that place the world was shut out and forgotten. Their business was to tabulate the transactions and strike the profits of their firm. They were to ask no questions and to answer none, but to deal with the written facts before them, and the only exception was if a partner wished some information. In such a case Mr. Sim came downstairs and went into the partner's room with solemnity, and returned like one who had been at a Cabinet meeting. Bank-holidays

and other times of occasional idleness he was understood to regard with disfavour, considering that an annual rest in autumn was sufficient for a properly constituted business man. There was a legend among the junior clerks that the book-keeper came to the office on Bank-holiday and did some mysterious business in his room, inventing new methods of book-keeping or reading over the books of past years for his relaxation. As a matter of fact, he went for a long and solitary walk in the country, partly because he loved its quietness, and partly because he wished to use his leisure conscientiously, being a man of order and principle in all things, from the smallest to the greatest.

The manager, who used to receive excuses for absence from members of the staff with cynical criticism, and who allowed himself to write letters of strong suggestion regarding the necessity of resisting illness and the duty of returning to work, was gravely alarmed when a note came from the book-keeper expressing in formal terms his regret that for the first

time during his connection with Rothwell's, he was unable through sickness to be present at his post. When three days had passed and Mr. Sim had not appeared, the manager—a man of imperfect sympathies and uncompromising manner—was so shaken that he went far out of his way to inquire for the book-keeper's health. He left the house with a grave face, and three days afterwards, when the news of Mr. Sim's death came, it did not take him by surprise. His last illness was quite orderly and uneventful. The doctor came to see him once a day, and then twice a day for a week, and on the last day brought a consultant. Mr. Sim was very courteous and grateful, but made no special inquiries as to his condition; he lay quietly and gave as little trouble as possible to his faithful landlady, with whom he had lived for many years. When she asked whether he wished to send for any friend, he explained that he had no relatives and that he should not dream of troubling any one in the office, because the heads of

departments had enough to do, and with juniors the book-keeper had no intercourse.

The day before the end he asked his landlady, if it was not too much trouble, to send his compliments to Mr. Carmichael of St. Jude's, and to say that if he were passing in that direction and could make it convenient to call, Mr. James Sim would be greatly obliged. Carmichael was devoutly thankful that he took this formal and colourless message seriously, and that he met his faithful adherent once before he lost him for ever. When the minister saw the look in his parishioner's eyes, he knew at once that the sickness was unto death, and that this was to be their first and last meeting, but nothing could be calmer or more restrained than their conversation. Having apologised for this additional call upon his time, and having thanked the minister for his prompt response, Mr. Sim explained that he had had the privilege of attending St. Jude's Church for many years, and that he had received much personal benefit from Mr. Carmichael's

ministrations—'both in the devout conduct of worship, if I may be allowed to say so, and in the able exposition of Divine truth.'

He declined to speak about his illness, for all his life he had obliterated himself, and preferred to express his good wishes for St. Jude's Church and its minister; he seemed pleased when Carmichael offered prayer, and said 'Amen' with great reverence; he also repeated the Lord's Prayer with the minister, and desired him to give the benediction; he bade Carmichael good-bye with a slightly softened accent, and was concerned that he should be properly shown out; before the minister left the room, Mr. Sim gave him one long look, in which for an instant the mask of a book-keeper dropped from his face, and he said, 'Mr. Carmichael, pardon me, but though you do not know me, I—love you.' When Carmichael returned next morning he saw from the landlady's face that Mr. Sim had spoken his last word to him, and when he stood in the death-chamber the pathos of that quiet life and

that tender heart came over him, and the minister wept for the death of a true and unknown friend.

It was in keeping with Mr. Sim's character that he should have carefully arranged his little affairs and made provision for every event. A lawyer called that afternoon upon the minister to make arrangements for the funeral, but he knew little more than Carmichael about his client. 'A highly respectable man,' said the lawyer, 'who held a responsible position, but very retiring in disposition and without friends. In the instructions which he gave me some time ago, he desired that there should be only one mourning-coach, and that you and the elder of the district (for whose name and address I shall be greatly obliged), the manager of the firm and myself, should be the only persons present at the funeral. I consider those instructions absolute, and have called to fix the day and time.'

Carmichael agreed that it was in keeping with the man that everything should be done

quietly, and that the presence of the manager should be understood to represent the office, but he suggested that there might be some person who knew Mr. Sim, and who would like to be present. If the lawyer did not object, when the notice of death was put in the paper, the hour at which the funeral would leave Mr. Sim's lodgings might be mentioned. After careful consideration, the lawyer agreed that this was not an invitation, and as nobody was likely to come could do no injury. And in those terms the notice of Mr. James Sim's death appeared in the morning paper, and was repeated again in the evening paper. That was the only reference ever made to Mr. James Sim in the public prints, and the only formal record of his history, unless many years before some paper had announced his birth. Certainly he was born, and he did live sixty-five years, and after this fashion he died.

When Carmichael arrived with his elder on the morning of the funeral, the modest hearse

and single mourning-coach touched his heart. It seemed to him one of the tragedies of life that this faithful soul, who had done his duty so thoroughly and uncomplainingly, should be laid to rest without a wreath of gratitude from his fellows, and he climbed the stairs with a depressed mind. Before he reached the door he heard steps behind him, and a respectably dressed man, like a foreman engineer, asked him in an accent which could be cut with a knife whether this was the place where Mr. Sim had lived, and explained that he had come to his burial. Standing on the landing and before he entered the house, the engineer told his story and explained his presence. 'Ye must understand, sir, that when I was a young lad I attended the class he held in a room in Rorison Street. For twenty year he rented that bit room and gave the best education he could to maybe half-a-dozen laddies in readin', writin', and 'rithmetic, with a touch of book-keeping and juist a look in to mathematics. He didna

say much, and he was very strict, but, my word! the trouble he took, and the time he gave to laddies that had no claim on him, and whom he picked up from the district.'

They were still standing on the landing, and Carmichael invited the engineer to continue, for the honest man had evidently much to say.

'When a laddie would come to fifteen, Mr. Sim would go round the city to get him a situation, maybe as a clerk and maybe as a workman. It didna matter how long it took him or how mony rebuffs he got, he was terrible perseverin' and he aye succeeded. But no doubt ye know aboot this yersel, for I'm believin' you were his minister.'

'Never heard one word of it,' said Carmichael, 'and I don't believe anybody except you, his laddies, know; I want to hear everything before I go in. So he got you all places after he'd educated you?'

'That he did,' said the engineer, with emphasis. 'I'll be bound Mister Sim started

dozens o' laddies in their life-work. Man'—and the engineer grew very enthusiastic—'I mind fine when he said to me in his precise way, "Thomas, I am glad to tell you that Messrs. Leslie & Company, the large engineers, have agreed to take you as an apprentice without any premium. You will tell your mother of this excellent opportunity, and you are to go to work at six o'clock next Monday, and I trust with the blessing of God that you will have a prosperous and successful career." I can repeat every word, sir; ye dinna forget the like o' that.

'Na, na'—for the engineer was now at full steam ahead—'my father was dead and there was nobody to help me. When I told my mother that night she fairly grat, and as long as she lived—and she was a gude woman and had a sair fecht—she aye mentioned Mr. Sim's name in her prayers.

'More than that, he never forgot ye afterwards, and mony a letter of advice I've had from him, when I was far awa. Now I've

got a shore appointment, and I've a wife and three bairns, I'm expecting some day to be chief engineer of the fleet, and I tell you, sir, I owe everything to the man we've come to bury.' And Carmichael hurried into the house, for it is not good to look upon a strong man when he has broken down, and all the more if the tears be in your own eyes.

It was evident that people had not known Mr. James Sim, and that there were going to be surprises that day. He had led a double life, and the other life was going to assert itself after he had gone.

'There's a splendid fellow outside,' he said to the lawyer, 'whom Mr. Sim has simply made, and who has come to show his gratitude. That makes five mourners, and I have a strong suspicion more will be turning up, for it is still ten minutes to the hour. One mourning-coach is not enough. I prophesy you'll need three by the time the company is gathered—and look here, this is going to be real mourning.'

As they were speaking, a man, say about thirty, entered, and one knew at once by his appearance that he was a successful merchant; there was about his carriage such a suggestion of alertness, self-confidence, foresight, integrity. Glancing round the room, he introduced himself to Carmichael, whom he knew by sight.

'I was shocked to see the notice of Mr. Sim's death in the paper, for I had no idea he was ill, and I am thankful to have this opportunity of doing a poor honour to my best benefactor. Had it not been for the help he gave me, a lad without father or mother, in a little class that nobody ever heard of, and the good advice I received from him in critical years, I should never have come to my present position. I am a junior partner in Pride Bros., whose name may be known to you as wholesale warehousesmen. Mr. Sim had only a limited salary, but he not only paid all the expenses of his little class, including the rent of the room, the light and firing, and the books, but he helped his boys after-

wards, when they were office lads and apprentices. I know that my first three holidays were paid out of his pocket. If every man did as much good as Mr. Sim, this would be a different city and a different world.' And the merchant was almost as much moved as the engineer, who was now sitting on the chair next the door, staring with immovable countenance into the eternities.

By this time even the lawyer, a man not given to imagination or swayed by sentiment, began to grasp the length and breadth of the private career of Mr. James Sim, book-keeper, and hastened to arrange for more mourning-coaches and more chairs in the simple sitting-room where Sim spent his evenings when he was not out teaching his class or visiting the widows and the fatherless.

'He was a cautious man,' said the landlady to Carmichael afterwards, 'and keepit himself to himself; he never said where he was going or what he was doing, but he was oot nearly every nicht on some work of his

own, and I knew it was always gude work. There were times when young laddies would come to see him here, and he would have long confabs with them, and puir respectable women, mostly widows, and I noticed that if they came cast down, they aye went awa comforted. That cupboard,' said the landlady, 'was little better than a grocer's shop, for he had it filled with pounds o' tea and sugar, and such-like; ay, he would have cornflour and things like arrowroot for sick folk—I'm no saying that he hadna peppermint-drops. Everything was arranged on the shelves as neat as you like, and afore he went out I've seen him slip a packet o' this or a packet o' that into his coat-tail pocket. But, mind ye, he didna like you to see him taking things oot o' his store, and I daurna make ony remark. Mr. Sim was peculiar in some of his ways, but I'm expectin' there's mony a hard-working woman and mony a struggling laddie has blessed his name. What he did was done in secret, and he would be

clean ashamed if he knew how it had come to the light of day.'

It certainly did come to the light with recompense on the day of the funeral, for the witnesses to the work of Mr. Sim mounted in procession up the stair down which he had gone on his evening errands of mercy, till there were no vacant places in the room, and the overflow had to sit in the landlady's parlour. Carmichael did his best to interview each one with brevity and sympathy, for he seemed to be laying the unexpected wreaths of gratitude and affection, more lasting than Easter lilies, upon the tomb of this modest, unselfish, Christian man.

They were indeed of various kinds and conditions, this congregation of unaffected mourners. A young doctor working among the poor in the East End, whose love of knowledge had been started in that class-room; a stalwart policeman, who, but for those evenings, might have been a criminal, but instead thereof was a guardian of the peace;

a substantial tradesman who had worked his way up from a message-boy to his own provision shop, and in later years used often to send a parcel of goods for Mr. Sim's distribution; a young clerk who had just become independent of assistance, and who had received so many kindnesses that he was hardly able to play the man; a sturdy and reticent stone-mason, who would not be drawn further than this, 'I had gude reason to ken Mr. Sim'; a delicate-looking man, who was an assistant in a draper's shop, whose life had been saved by a visit to the country, paid by his old teacher; the third officer of a seagoing liner, who happened to be in Glasgow at the time, and came to the funeral of his early friend. Each man had his own history and his own debt, and there were many more who had not heard and perhaps might never hear of their benefactor's death. Some had gone before him, and he had seen them through their last sickness—curious to say, this silent and pedantic man

was very welcome and very tactful in the sick-rooms of those he visited; some had gone abroad and were far away, and among Mr. Sim's papers were letters from every quarter of the world—from his lads on the nitrate fields, on Western ranches, in Canadian backwoods, in Eastern cities, and almost every colony of the Empire. Those he had carefully kept and docketed, and his landlady found him from time to time reading them carefully.

Upon Carmichael's suggestion, they waited beyond the hour to make sure that the last of this unique company had gathered, and then when they reached the street it was found that they numbered, not four, but twenty-four. This was not to be a funeral where empty carriages were sent as a mark of respect; this day there was to be a difficulty in accommodating a gathering of sorrowing friends. The one mourning-coach had been reinforced by two more, but beyond that cabs had been called into requisition, and so

they started, not with one, but with six carriages following the hearse.

When they came to the cemetery and made their way to the quiet corner where a grave had been selected, another congregation was waiting. It was not common in those days for women to go to a funeral in Scotland, and they would not have dreamed of attending the service in the house. It was thought unbecoming that women should be present at such trying functions, lest perchance they might break down and disturb the solemnity, and because the awful and arduous affairs of life, according to the Scots idea, should be left in the hands of men. But round the grave of James Sim a group of women had gathered, and no one looking at them could fail to read the reason of their presence or would have had the heart to forbid it. They were aged women who had been his pensioners, widows whom he had comforted in their straits, mothers whose sons he had aided, wives whose husbands owed their all to him.

They were in the best black they could command, but their garments were only a sign of their hearts ; they carried themselves with dignity, as Scotswomen try to do on such occasions, not causing their voices to be heard, nor doing anything to make the duty of the minister harder than it was; but the tears were flowing silently as they stood, an outer fringe, round the men at the grave.

Precedence at a Scots funeral is a delicate question and is carefully adjusted ; it is settled by nearness of kin or marriage relationship ; but this day it resolved itself, for the bonds were those neither of blood nor marriage, but of love. This man had no one of his family to do him the last tribute of respect, but he had made such good use of his single talent that God was restoring it to him with usury. After the coffin, as they carried it to the grave, came the four invited mourners, and then the others arranged themselves as they pleased, giving the first place to the merchant, the engineer, and the doctor.

Men and women, they were gathered, not in response to a printed letter on black-edged paper, but in answer to the gratitude and the regret of their hearts, and when loving hands let down James Sim's body into the grave, Carmichael lifted up his voice and prayed:

'Heavenly Father, who art the Source of every good and beautiful work, being gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in respect to the memory of Thy faithful servant, James Sim, we render Thee thanks with one heart for his kindness unto widows and orphans, to poor lads and sick people, whereby he manifested Thy love and commended the faith of Thy Son. And we earnestly beseech Thee to shed abroad the same love in the hearts of Thy servants present, and bestow upon us the same humility, that we also may fulfil our stewardship as he has done, and in the last day may be also accepted of Thee through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord.' And many said 'Amen.'

The family which he had won for himself

set up a simple cross, draped with Easter lilies, to the memory of their benefactor, with this inscription :

JAMES SIM

'WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.'

NATHANAEL

IV

Nathanael

THE remnant of the supralapsarians judged James Marchmont to be a mere amateur in doctrine, and a victim of feeble good-nature in conduct; possibly a genuine Christian, but without discernment of mind or firmness of will. The congregation, from the oldest to the youngest, placed him an early first among the elders, and on account of the simplicity, purity, and charity of the man called him Nathanael.

His was indeed a disposition of almost exasperating patience and sweetness. When the chief bore of St. Jude's (whom the Church

officer called 'that thing' and Carmichael had to put down with firmness at congregational meetings, before whom even stalwarts fled in the city and at whose rising sedate guilds hastily dispersed) had some new fad to ventilate, he lay in wait for Marchmont, and that Christian martyr would listen for an hour on end to the dreary flow of twaddle. Into his sympathetic ears Mrs. MacWhae, a woman of broken spirit and perpetual tears, would pour her woes about her two sons, lads of excellent character and sound ability, because one would not teach in the Sunday-school and the other played football on Saturdays. And when Peter MacCraw, the malcontent of St. Jude's, would be raging furiously over the Church accounts, and the indignant office-bearers were treating him with frank discourtesy, Marchmont would go out of his way to appreciate Peter's conscientiousness, and talk that pragmatical man almost into reason.

If there was a quarrel in the Church,

Nathanael was employed as mediator, and scarcely ever failed to settle the affair. If there was any sorrow heavier than another, he was a presence of comfort, and he used then to be called Barnabas, the son of consolation; on other occasions he was compared to John; and indeed he monopolised, in the talk of the congregation, all the attractive male characters in Bible history, and just stopped short by the barrier of sex from being called Dorcas. For years he had administered the poor's fund, and it was understood, although he would have been much pained if this had been known, that he doubled the grants out of his own pocket, and he managed the Sunday-school as if the children had been his own family. Politicians of both sides besought him to enter the city council, and promised that whatever were his views there would be no contest. When he stood behind the collection-plate at the church door people realised that giving was an act of worship, and when he carried the cup in the

Sacrament his face was a benediction. It was even said that Simeon MacQuittrick was softened in his company, and had admitted the possibility of salvation for members of the Established Church; but this put a heavy strain upon our credulity, and was considered to be rather a parabolic compliment to Nathanael than a statement of fact about that uncompromising Covenanter.

His ways were so unworldly and his character so winsome that he was surrounded with an atmosphere of romance, and his life became a kind of idyll. As a matter of fact, he had in his day been an iron merchant — one of the most speculative and shrewdest of businesses—and by a lucky inspiration had gone on selling for three months with a falling market, and at the end of the crisis wisely retired with a competency. But as foresight of this kind was thought inconsistent with his ingenuous nature, it came to be believed that the worldlings of the iron market, recognising one righteous

man in their city, had simply thrust business upon him as one showers gifts upon a happy child. His wife had died after a brief married life, and people of accurate memory and candid speech described her as a not very good-looking and rather flighty young woman. But she died in giving birth to his only child, so in course of time her person had been surrounded with a golden mist, and he had come to think of her as a beautiful saint.

When reference was made from the pulpit to the Virgin Mary, or to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, or St. Teresa, or St. Margaret of Scotland, or any other holy woman who had touched the religious imagination, he was always much softened, and used to thank Carmichael with tears in his eyes. He had an enlarged photograph of her in his dressing-room, and he carried a small copy in his breast pocket; if any man lost his wife, he shared the bereavement with unaffected emotion, and the only time when he could be angry was if any one ill-used a young

child, or if any misguided man made a second marriage. He was careful to say that he judged no man, and that there might be reasons of expediency for such a step, but in his view the ideal marriage was that of one man and one woman united for time and eternity, and he dwelt fondly upon the thought that his young wife presided over his life as a guardian angel. Whether or not Mrs. Marchmont had really been a rather commonplace and not very refined young woman did not matter; her distant face had been glorified and her whole life spiritualised, and more than any other influence she had gentled James Marchmont's life.

The chivalrous romance with which our Nathanael had invested the memory of his wife included also his son and their only child. It was a felicitous convention in St. Jude's to accept Marchmont's deliverances as heavenly inspirations and never at any time to criticise them, and it was our earnest desire and strenuous effort, not only to sympathise

with his devotion to a departed saint, but also to accept his fond estimate of the boy. His father had called him Leslie, because that was his mother's maiden surname, and it was his delight to tell his friends how the mother was living in her son, for whom she sacrificed her life, and how his earthly comfort was to see her living portrait. There were no virtues Nathanael did not find in Leslie, and no fault he had ever been able to discover; indeed, he confided to Carmichael once his fear that a lad so pure and gracious, sweet and obedient, would not be spared long on earth, but would soon be again resumed by heaven, where his mother was wearying for him.

Carmichael was in that hour torn by conflicting forces—his affectionate reverence for Marchmont, whom he looked upon as a father, and his keen sense of reality. When doting mothers enlarged upon the superlative qualities of prodigal sons, Carmichael was sometimes tempted to laugh and sometimes to rage, but when Nathanael sang with tremulous

accents the idyll of Leslie, the tears came to the minister's heart.

It was not that the lad was evil-tempered, or vicious, or repulsive, or disobedient. There was not enough strength in him to do anything very bad or to be very disagreeable. He had a foolish face and a feeble constitution, but his manner was plausible and pleasing. Upon no occasion, as his father used to boast, had he ever refused to do anything he asked; this was likely true, but then whatever he promised he was never likely to do. His was that pliable type which is ever saying, 'I go,' but goes not. With his father he was kindness itself, so far as sentimental words and friendly little offices went.

It did one good to see him helping his father to put on his top-coat, or taking care that his father's throat was well covered; and it was mentioned as a proof of filial piety that when Leslie was asked to take his turn at the penny savings bank he excused himself with a modest smile, as of one not wishing

WITH HIS FATHER HE WAS KINDNESS ITSELF.

to make his good works known, because he felt that his place was by his lonely father's side. And if Mr. Marchmont was detained from church by any illness, however slight, there was no power, not even his father's wish, that would induce Leslie to leave the house on Sunday. It is true he might spend Monday in the city, where he had no work to do, but then he always brought home a flower or some other trifle for his father, bought, as his father reflected, at a sacrifice out of his allowance. 'Just to show, father, that though I did not see you I was thinking of you'; and then he would kiss him in the most affecting manner. He had all kinds of nice little ways, and if you had only seen him for an evening when he was encompassing his father with observances, Leslie might have deceived the very elect.

Leslie's career would have disillusionised any one except Nathanael, and it left no doubt in the general mind about the lad's weakness. His enthusiasm when he went to school was

so glowing that his father thanked God that there would be one scholar at least in his family, and his devotion to work in the evening for the first ten days was so extreme that his father consulted the doctor and counselled prudence. 'My only fear is that the sword may wear out the scabbard; it is often so with those bright and eager minds.' As a docile boy, Leslie took his father's warning to heart and restrained his energy so carefully that, in his report upon Leslie's first term, the master complained of a tendency to inattention and a want of application, and a year afterwards told his father that Leslie was incurably slack and careless, and that although his ability was not naturally great, he would not even use what he had. For a brief hour Marchmont was shaken by this deliverance, and spoke as seriously as he could to his son. The lad was so much hurt, not by the Headmaster's hard words, for 'he does not understand me,' but by his father's disappointment, 'for I just live on

your approval' (from his earliest days Leslie had a prolific genius for polite phrases), that his father accused himself bitterly of cruelty, and set himself to comfort the sufferer.

For days Leslie wore a look of chastened resignation, and only slowly regained his former manner, and his father explained that he had sent him to another school. 'If the dear lad has sympathy and feels that he is loved, he can do anything; if he is harshly treated, he shrivels up like a blossom stricken by the frost.' And we did not laugh, because it was Nathanael speaking, but if it could have been kept from his father, any of the elders would have been glad to box Leslie's ears.

From the second school the tender plant had to be withdrawn on account of the rudeness of the boys in their games, and also a personal assault made upon Leslie on a false charge of sneaking. 'He has, unfortunately for him,' his father remarked, 'my wife's refinement of manner and shrinking from

rough people. Were it not that he is really so brave and manly, without any assumption, I could have wished that he were a girl; he has so fine and sweet a disposition.' His nature, indeed, was so delicate that his education was completed at home with the aid of a private tutor. This arrangement was most satisfactory to Leslie, for one reason—it allowed him to be all forenoon under the same roof with his father, and he made a point every hour of leaving his work for a considerable time, just to see that his father was not too lonely, and to render him any passing service.

When the time came for Leslie to go into business, Mr. Marchmont took immense trouble to secure a suitable office, and in this he had Leslie's most hearty and interested attention. There was some wild talk to begin with about his being apprenticed as an engineer, and his father, owing to past business connections, could have secured him an excellent opening. But Leslie, while him-

self longing above all things for the calling of an engineer, refused to enter upon any work which would oblige him to leave his father alone from five in the morning to seven in the evening. 'Poor lad! I cannot help appreciating his affection, but I am sorry he has refused this chance; however, when it's a question about me, you know how obstinate he is. "Father," he said to me yesterday, "there are only two of us, we must keep close together."' A shipping firm was also ready to take Mr. Marchmont's son, but Leslie, again devoured with anxiety for his father's well-being, found that the clerks in shipping offices had often very late hours, and occasionally had to work all night, and he vetoed shipping with much firmness. Short-sighted and unsympathetic masters might call him a slacker, but Leslie could put down his foot on a just occasion.

An office was at last secured which did not require him to leave his father's side till 9 a.m. and allowed him to be again at the

post of filial duty before 6 p.m., and Leslie flung himself into the profession of accountant with consuming zeal. 'Father,' he said, with a touch of moisture in his eyes, 'I never want to be rich, for that brings no happiness; but I should like to earn an honourable position for your sake,' which greatly cheered our good Nathanael, who recognised in the son the high spirit of his mother. When Mr. Marchmont inquired of the firm whether Leslie was giving them satisfaction, he received guarded answers, and was again haunted by the fear that hard-headed men of figures, who were constantly dealing with difficult accounts and clearing up the affairs of bankrupt firms, might be too matter-of-fact and too prosaic to appreciate a lad of feeling. Leslie made no complaint, and answered his father bravely when he asked him whether he was comfortable. He spoke rather as one who had his cross to carry, but concealed its weight.

When the senior partner of the firm died—

a magnate who did not know Leslie by name and who had never spoken to him during his nine months' service—the lad, a creature of sentiment, was so overcome by grief that he declared himself unable to resume work in that office. 'It was so sudden, father, and so sad. I know it is foolish of me, but I shall not be able to get rid of the memory. Of course I could go on with my work, but I would not be able to do it to my satisfaction, and I cannot bear the idea, for my own sake or yours, father, of half-done work.' His father accepted this as another of the disabilities of a sensitive disposition. 'Really I do not know how he will be able to face life in this rough world; it would not do were there many like him; but if there were not a few tender hearts, life would not be worth living. It is not from me but from his mother he inherits his tenderness and sympathy.'

After this affecting episode, it was understood among Mr. Marchmont's friends that

Leslie's health had weakened, and that his condition was a cause of anxiety. Neither his appetite nor his face suggested any kind of danger, but the ailments of the nervous system are subtle. His father was afraid that Leslie had begun to brood, and laid himself out to cheer his cast-down son by various little diversions. 'If his mother only had been spared it would have been different,' said dear Nathanael, 'for he is a real mother's boy.' Finally, after consultation with his friends, who, I am afraid, gave no encouragement to the idea, but rather treated it with veiled derision, his father took Leslie for a trip to the East, and came home in high spirits because his stricken son had at last thrown off the effect of his chief's death, and was recovering his tone.

Leslie, however, showed no devouring desire to resume business in any department and, we were given to understand, was going to devote himself entirely to the care of his father. Faithful friends hinted to Mr.

Marchmont that this was not the best training for his son's character, and perhaps was not the wisest course for himself; but words were useless with that dear man, who only shook his head with expressions of gratitude for our interest, and assured us that, while what we said applied to the average lad with much force, Leslie was in a class by himself. No one would have hurt Nathanael's feelings for a king's ransom; and so, with the reserve of a cruel kindness, his friends looked on while the father thanked God for so tender-hearted and refined a son, and the son pranced round the city dressed in the latest fashion of tie, waistcoat, handkerchief, and cane, lunching at the best restaurants, faithfully visiting every cricket and football match, travelling first-class on his railway-journeys, and generally enjoying every luxury. Carmichael was just discussing with himself whether he should pluck up courage and shake Marchmont's little paradise about his ears, even at the cost of wounding

both Nathanael and himself, when things took a new turn. Nathanael called one morning and informed the minister with the utmost joy that Leslie proposed to make a surprising departure.

'You must understand, Mr. Carmichael,' explained the father, 'that my sainted wife and I had resolved that, if God was ever pleased to give us a son, we should dedicate him from the first, like young Samuel, to the holy ministry; and, if she had been spared, it would have been our joy to guide his mind in that direction, and the pride of our life to see him an ordained minister of the Kirk. It was not the will of God to spare my beloved wife, but I have never forgotten our spiritual ambition, and I have ever hoped that Leslie's thoughts might turn towards the Church.'

As Carmichael was too much amazed to offer any remark, Nathanael continued, 'This is not a matter, however, placed in human hands, and Leslie made no sign that he had ever considered the ministry. Still, it was

very remarkable how he refused engineering and shipping, and how, by the hand of Providence, as I now think, he left the accountant's office, where there would have been so brilliant a career before him and, during these last months, has been in such an anxious and restless condition. I felt that there was some meaning in all this, and I was not quite astonished when the dear lad told me this morning that, after careful and prayerful consideration, he had come to the conclusion that he ought to study for the ministry. He would have told me sooner, but he very properly wished to be fixed in his own mind before he took such an important step. And now, Mr. Carmichael, as you have often pleaded most earnestly that young men should hear this high call, and not be afraid to carry this heaviest cross, I felt that I must come at once and give you this encouraging news. 'Your words,' concluded Mr. Marchmont with emotion, 'have not been in vain, nor my prayers.'

As the situation dawned upon Carmichael's receptive mind, and he imagined Leslie denying in turn every tempting allurement of worldly gain, and accepting from the highest motives the call to the severest profession—as he saw with the eye of prophecy that austere toiler plucked at every examination and rated by every professor, and then, supposing that by some miracle he reached the length of the ministry, as he beheld this amazing lad addressing a congregation of grown-up men and women on the most sacred things of human experience, the minister was so much overcome that he was obliged to withdraw himself from Mr. Marchmont's observation, and go over to the window to study the opposite houses.

Nathanael was not surprised at the impression he had produced, and when their common emotion, although the causes were different, had subsided, they took counsel together about the practical steps. And it was then Carmichael had an inspiration.

Two things he had quickly resolved he might not do: he would neither cut the heart of this good man by suggesting that his son was nothing but a vain show, and the last person in St. Jude's to enter the ministry of the Crucified; and he would not do anything to assist Leslie in his new device and his general uselessness. The best plan would be to put this genial slacker through an ordeal which would bring out his real character and turn his mind very speedily from the road to the theological hall.

'It is always very encouraging when any young man considers that he has heard the call of Christ, and professes himself willing to share the Master's burden; but, as you know, Mr. Marchmont, the labourer must be prepared for his work, and the Scots Kirk trains her ministers very severely. You spoke a moment ago as if Leslie could go at once to the university, but I am not sure that he is fit; of course he has had a sound school education, and I do not mean that he has not

been a hard worker, but even a good scholar grows rusty after two or three years, especially if he has given his mind to the work of an accountant.

'What I suggest,' Carmichael continued, 'is that Leslie go to a capable coach for six months, and then we shall see whether he is ready to enter the university.' And Carmichael had in his mind the very tutor designed of Providence for the searching and trying of young Marchmont.

Roderick McCrorie was a tall and powerful Celt, black-bearded and fierce in expression, who knew six languages thoroughly, and was understood to be on intimate terms with six other departments of knowledge. There were few examinations for which he did not prepare, from the Militia Army examination to the Indian Civil Service, and there was no pupil to whom he did not give his full strength. If the lad was a worker, then McCrorie exploited him to the last ounce, and if he were a rotter McCrorie doubled him up and flung

him off in a month. His own constitution was Bessemer steel, his pace was tremendous, and his language was vehement, for he had the advantage of reinforcing any deficiencies of the milder English from the resources of the fertile Gaelic. Into Roderick's most capable and quite remorseless hands Leslie was committed, with a conclusive result in three weeks' time.

'You will be noticing, Mr. Carmichael,' reported McCrorie in the minister's study, 'that I am not denying Leslie Marchmont to be *compos mentis*, or affirming that he is in a legal sense imbecile. But I will give evidence in any place that he is on the border-land, and that he is incapable of acquiring anything that may be called accurate knowledge. There is in him, by nature, very little mind, and what there is he will not use, and for me to be taking fees from his father for teaching a fool is not this man's way, and for me to be sending such a miserable creature into any place of learning would be a disgrace to my name. Maybe you

will be telling his father this in better language, but I am judging,' finished up McCrorie with a grim smile, 'that, after a small talk we were having in my rooms last night, the lad will not be wanting any more of my instruction.'

No complete and trustworthy account of that final interview between Roderick McCrorie and Leslie Marchmont has ever been given, but there is a shrewd idea that, in the glare of the tutor's uncompromising speech, Leslie saw himself for once, at least, in his natural state, and it is certain that he refused, in quite distinct terms, ever to place himself again within McCrorie's reach.

'Of course I do not blame you, Mr. Carmichael, for one moment,' said Nathanael, when this chapter of Leslie's life closed, 'for you did everything for the best, and you could not have known how unfeeling a man Mr. McCrorie is. It has been a great blow, both to Leslie and myself, but I am glad to say he takes the matter in the right spirit; he does not repent of his intention to become a minister, but he sees

that the arduous study which is quite just and proper would be too much for his strength, and he has too high a spirit to be an inefficient or unlearned minister. After a long conversation we both agree that he must give up this idea; but, as the dear lad said himself, "there are other places where one may do good than in the pulpit," and I know that he is very keenly interested in various kinds of social work in the city.'

With every year Nathanael grew purer and gentler, more beneficent and more lovable, and with every year Leslie became, if possible, more idle, more useless, more luxurious, and more self-conceited. When Nathanael died, which was, for him, like passing from the outer court of heaven into the holy place, his last words were a blessing upon the most tender and faithful of sons, and a promise that he would tell the dear departed to whom he hastened of her son's goodness. And nothing could exceed either the studied perfection of Leslie's mourning dress at the funeral, or his

graceful and touching display of grief. He is now living easily upon his father's means; and when the son meets from time to time one of Nathanael's friends he will refer, with excellent taste and a suggestion of emotion, to 'my dear father whom you knew so well, and whose loss to me can never be repaired.' Which goes to prove that conspicuous goodness may be a great gain to the world and a practical loss to a man's own family.

RIGHTEOUS OVERMUCH

V

Righteous Overmuch

THE ordinary business of the court of elders had been finished and the minister was about to pronounce the benediction, when an elder rose whom every one honoured, both for his ability and his integrity, as well as his courtesy and kindness, and spoke with deep emotion.

'Moderator and brethren, I have a communication to make to the Session which gives me greater pain than I have ever had in my life, and which I venture to think will be received with sympathy. Owing to the recent financial crisis, and the policy of the banks in calling in their loans

our firm has been gravely embarrassed, and I am sorry to say we shall be obliged to-morrow to place ourselves in the hands of our creditors; this is a great grief to my partners and myself, for as you know, gentlemen, our firm has an ancient name, and we have tried to keep it unsoiled; circumstances, however, have been too much for us, and it is possible that our history is near an end; at any rate, we shall not be able, for the first time, to meet our obligations.

'With our business affairs, I am aware, this court has nothing to do, and I will not refer further to that side of things; you have, however, the charge of your honour as a court of the Church, and it is your business to watch over the character of your members; it is a disaster if a communicant in the Christian Church should fail in his moral duty, but it is a still greater calamity if any man in the position of elder should not be able to keep Christ's law so far as a poor man can. As to-morrow I shall be practically, if not

legally, bankrupt, and any man in that position should lay his resignation on the table of the court, to leave them to do with it as they please and as the circumstances suggest, I beg now with deep regret to resign my position as an elder in St. Jude's. I have been proud to hold the office, I should hate in any way to disgrace it.' And Mr. Ryrie left the court, but not before our Nathanael had shaken him warmly by the hand. The door was hardly closed before Nathanael, usually one of the most diffident and silent of the court, was on his feet and asking the Moderator to allow him to move a resolution.

'I'm sure,' he said, 'that I express the deepest feeling of every heart when I say that we have received this intelligence with the greatest sorrow, and that there is not one of us who will not remember our brother Ryrie in our prayers to-night; there is not in the city a more upright man, and there is not a firm which has a higher reputation. As we all know, what has happened is not their blame,

but their misfortune, and in the present state of affairs might be the lot of any of us. It is quite in keeping with our brother's spirit to place his resignation before us, and I do not deny that there are circumstances when such a resignation might be wisely accepted, but in this case we are all at one; it would be a serious loss to the Session to part with Mr. Ryrie, and it would be a great blank in our own fellowship; he has been a strength to the court, and he will be the same in years to come, and I beg to move'—and then after a long consultation with the Moderator, for Nathanael was not skilful in drawing up resolutions, he read as follows: '"The Session decline to receive the resignation which Mr. Ryrie has tendered, and invite him to continue in the office of elder; they express their sympathy with him in his present trial, and they place on record their affectionate and respectful appreciation of his unblemished character and valuable services."'

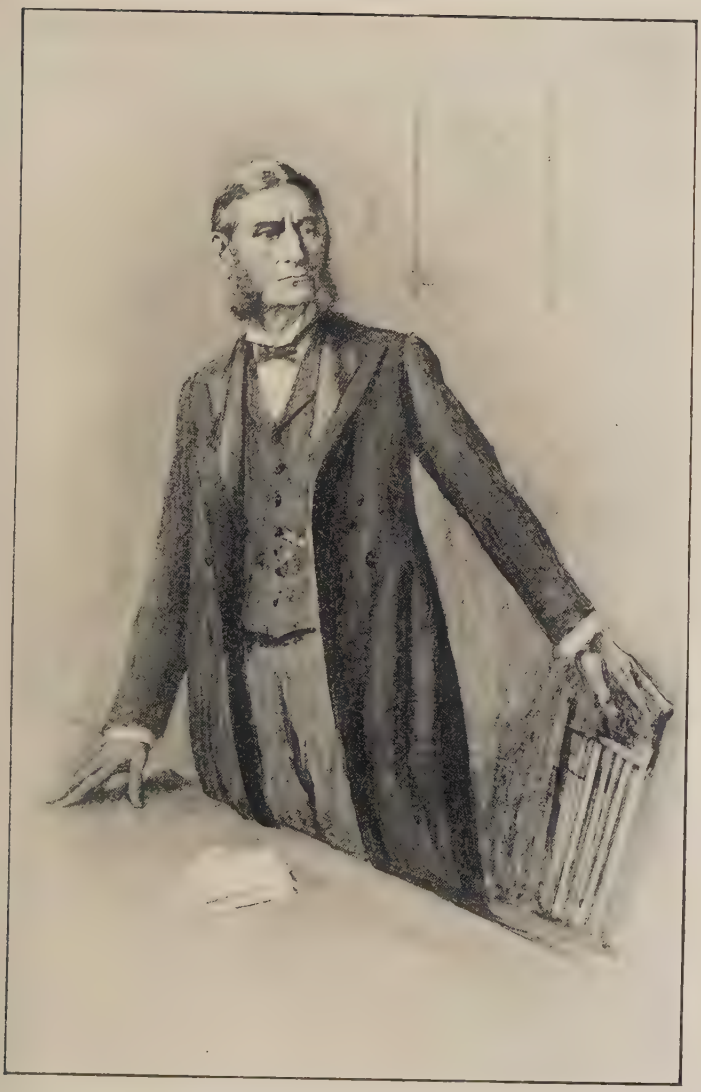
They were already arranging that the

Moderator and Nathanael should wait upon Mr. Ryrie at his house that evening, and convey to him this resolution and the good wishes of this Session, when a member of court who had moved uneasily once or twice called attention to the fact that the resolution had not been put, and therefore was not carried.

'Yes, Mr. Moderator,' said Mr. Skinner, rising, 'I do mean that I am going to propose an amendment to that motion, or if it be more in order I shall move the previous question. It is not, certainly, agreeable to occupy my present position, or to take the line which I am doing; one is always more popular when he says smooth things and falls in with the majority. But I take it we are here to obey our consciences and to do our duty by the congregation committed to our charge. I am in perfect agreement with all that has been said about the financial crisis which has affected us all, and also about the high character of Mr. Ryrie's firm, but I wish

to submit that we have to deal with facts. The facts are that he is an elder of this Church, the highest position one can obtain in our religious organisation, and that he is going to compound with his creditors; it is very unfortunate for him that he should be in this position, but it would be still worse for us if he continued in the eldership. I do not say that a bankrupt is as bad as a drunkard, it is not necessary to make comparisons. But it is a scandal when one cannot pay his debts, and therefore I think Mr. Ryrie has shown a wise discretion in resigning, and I beg to submit that we express our sympathy with him and that we accept the resignation.'

'Does any one second this motion?' said Carmichael in a voice eloquent with indignation, and a silence followed which would have daunted any one except that indomitable Aristides. No one would second it, and the Moderator announced triumphantly that the motion of Nathanael was carried unanimously.



'I AM GOING TO PROPOSE AN AMENDMENT TO THAT MOTION.'

'Excuse me,' said Mr. Skinner, 'you cannot say unanimously till you know whether every one is in favour,' and when the show of hands was taken he held his up against it; he also asked that his protest should be entered in the minutes. As Mr. Skinner anticipated, and the elders feared, he was successful, for when Mr. Ryrie learned that one elder had dissented he refused to resume office, and St. Jude's lost for a time one of the representative merchants of the city.

This stroke was admitted to be Mr. Skinner's masterpiece, and every one was agreed that he had never been so successfully offensive, but the incident was only the outcome of his character. Mr. Skinner, during the course of a long life, had never done anything openly wrong either at school or in his youth or in business or in Church affairs or in his home or in society. He was an abstainer and a good liver; he was a hard worker and faithful to every charge; he had always paid what was due; he never had broken a bargain; he gave

largely to charity, and helped to manage the business affairs of a hospital ; he had provided for his wife and family ; he had family worship morning and evening ; his attendance at church touched the highest point ; and he visited his district as an elder four times a year. His very appearance, in black frock-coat and waistcoat, dark grey trousers, black tie, carefully brushed hat ; the thin lines of his mouth, the cold expression of his eye, his severely trimmed whiskers, his exact form of speech, his formal handshake, were all a revelation of the man.

He was emphatically a righteous man, against whom no one could bring any charge of omission or commission, and he was simply detested. There was no one who could say a bad word of him, there was no one ever moved to say a good word of him. There was no one need be ashamed to be in his company, but every one hastened to get out of his company ; so far as was known he had no friends, and for that matter hardly any

acquaintance, for men would lose ten minutes rather than travel in the 'bus with him. His wife was well dressed, and was allowed the use of a hired brougham; in case of illness she would have had the best medical attendance, and her husband always spoke to her with respect, but people noticed that she had a cowed and spiritless look, not as of one who was ill-used, for no one suspected Skinner of secret domestic vices, but the look of one who had lost vitality. She had blanched and withered under the shadow of her austere husband. His sons, except one who had gone abroad, were unmarried and lived at home. They had not played the fool, and they were not known to quarrel with their father. But the father and sons were never seen together, and at home they sat in different rooms; if they ever talked it was only on business arrangements, and they never exchanged an affectionate greeting.

Place him where you please, he would do righteously; do what he pleased he would

be disliked; if there were an opportunity of acting graciously, he always refused it; if there were an opportunity of acting severely, he always seized it. He was carried away by no impulse, he was guided by a frozen reason; he was never troubled by a warm heart, he was dominated by a pedantic conscience. He was always logical, and often rose to sublime heights of common-sense; he was for ever at war with sentiment, and carried about with him the atmosphere of a refrigerator. And at the close of that meeting it was only the singular grace of God and the charitable influence of Nathanael which prevented Carmichael from inviting Mr. Skinner into the vestry when the meeting of Session was over, and explaining to him in the frankest and most unreserved terms what he thought both of himself and of his works.

One seldom regrets that he has not spoken harshly, for one never knows what sudden turn life may take, and Carmichael felt he

had lost nothing by his self-restraint, a quality in which he did not greatly excel, when a message came from Mr. Skinner, asking him to call as quickly as possible because they were in great trouble. When he arrived he was shown into the dining-room, where the very furniture, of heavy mahogany, and the absence of ornament, and the general air of severity, bore the impress of the family character. It did not matter how joyful and hopeful one might be, an hour in that room, or even five minutes if you were susceptible would reduce the wildest spirit to a state of solemnity. Even although one were simply charged with charity till it oozed from his finger-tips, he would be obliged to take a more unrelenting view of his fellows after breathing the atmosphere of that hall of justice. Carmichael felt that nothing but a moral earthquake could upset the iron composure and imperturbable self-righteousness of this house, or rather of its head, but when Mr. Skinner entered the room he knew there

had been some kind of catastrophe. His hair had lost its exact set; his eyes were many degrees softer; the straight line of his lips had been shaken; his very clothes seemed to be worn carelessly. The whole fashion of his countenance had altered, and his manner was broken and hesitating.

'Very glad to see you, Mr. Carmichael; that is not quite what I intended to say, for I cannot be glad in the circumstances, very much the opposite. But I am grateful, very grateful, and Mrs. Skinner—that is, I mean to say, my wife—also thanks you for coming so promptly. We thought of you in this hour of trouble; for although I may never have said it to you, I have been—that is, I am—in fact, we have enjoyed many of your sermons very much, especially, we now think, those about sorrow. They—have touched us more than we knew, and—we turn to you to-day as by an instinct, if I may put it that way.' And as he floundered along Carmichael began to believe that there might

be another Skinner whom neither he nor any other man had as yet known.

'Before I tell you why we have asked you to come,' continued the elder, who seemed anxious to unburden himself, 'I must make —a confession. It is rather painful, and in fact, humiliating, but that is part of the— punishment, and quite fair. You know my two sons. Quite so, and—no doubt you are aware that they are well-doing young men— not quite so religious as I should like—and there are one or two things in which we do not see eye to eye, but I am bound to say that I have had no cause for complaint. If I had been—well, perhaps a little more, what shall I say, understanding or sympathetic—yes, that is the word, sympathetic—our home might have been happier. I know that my wife thinks so, and—Jessie has always been nearer the boys than I've been.' As Mr. Skinner confessed that he had not been infallible, and above all, when he called his wife by her Christian name, Carmichael felt as

if he were looking at winter changing into spring, and the conversion of a soul. But he knew better than to say a single word: it was his part to listen and to encourage.

'Pray be seated, Mr. Carmichael; pardon my rudeness, but—this evening I have had much to shake me, and with your permission I will continue the explanation of our family history. Very likely you did not know that I had, I mean have, a third son. Some of the brethren, of course, knew him, but they might not mention the matter to you. Very considerate; it would be a good thing if we all regarded one another's feelings, for life has many trials, and I am learning that we should be kindly one to another. I wish I had learned this sooner, but I need not go into that just now. I have something else to speak about, and I am obliged to you for hearing me so patiently.'

'Tell me everything, Mr. Skinner,' said Carmichael, 'and be sure that whatever your sorrow may be I want to share it with you,

and so will all your brethren. It is all we can do for one another in the hour of trouble, and it is what the Lord does for us every one—"touched with the feeling of our infirmities."' And there was a tenderness in Carmichael's voice which came from his heart; for if a Celt be quick to anger he is also quick to love.

'Thank you from my heart, sir. As we do unto others so shall it be done unto us, is a true word, but it has its exceptions. I am finding one this evening, and kindness is very welcome to-night, for we are in great tribulation, and it is largely of my own making. I see it now, and I trust that I repent, but I fear me it is too late. That word comes to me, "Found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears."' And Mr. Skinner controlled himself with a visible effort.

'But I have not told you about my son, who was my youngest, and as Jessie said to me, our Benjamin—lost to us like Benjamin,

but whether he be found or not again I know not, but I pray God may be merciful. Certainly he has come back to his home on earth, but whether he has come to our Heavenly Father—ah! that is the question which is trying us above every other.

'But I am anticipating, Mr. Carmichael, and I'd better proceed in order, because you must be in possession of the facts before you can do any good; and my wife and I are hoping that you will be used of God this evening to help a young man who seems near to death, and to relieve the anxiety of his father and mother. My youngest son, to continue, was the best-looking of the family—very like my beloved wife, and he was in all ways the most attractive—she is the gentlest of women, but I fear me has had a hard lot. But I may not turn aside, though there are many things I could say to-night. Unfortunately, while like his mother in most things, he inherited my hardness and pride. We did not get on well together, Mr. Carmichael, and I

am willing to take the blame to-night, for his mother always found him pleasant and affectionate, and people outside liked him and made much of him. It would weary you to go into everything, but finally we quarrelled, and he told me he would go abroad and never come back again.' Mr. Skinner at this point rose and paced the room and then, standing at the fireplace and leaning his head upon his hand, he went on with the family tragedy.

'His mother was nearly broken-hearted, and she pled with him to change his mind, and he would have done so if I had asked him. But, God forgive me! I refused, and told her that as he had made his bed he must lie on it, and that it would be better for us all that we should part. We parted in anger, and I have never seen him till he was brought from the steamer to our house to-day, I fear dying.' And the severest elder in St. Jude's sobbed with those tears which are wrung from a strong man's heart, and are the bitterest in the world.

'Just one word more,' said Mr. Skinner, when he had recovered, 'and you will know everything. During the years of his absence he wrote to his mother once or twice, but he said very little about himself; we gathered that he was not in want, and that he was not living badly, but that was all we knew. Whether he was a Christian or not, or what he thought about those things, we had no idea, and now since he was brought to his home and laid on his bed he has been unconscious. Mr. Carmichael, his mother and I pray that he may be spared, although we cannot hope for that, but what we desire above everything is that he should give some sign that he is saved. If he be lost'—and Skinner's voice sank into a low wail—'his blood for all eternity shall lie at his father's door.'

Carmichael at that moment did justice to the strength of a creed which placed the things which are unseen infinitely above the things which are seen, and the strength of a man who held this creed of the value of the soul

and the awfulness of moral issues, with the marrow of his bones. And his heart went with Skinner when the elder said, 'If the choice were given me this night whether I would have Robert restored to us in health, but a stranger to Christ, or taken away from us this night, but saved in the Lord, our heart's desire would be that Robert should be taken, even although he never heard me in this world ask his forgiveness.' And Mr. Skinner led the minister upstairs.

A nurse left the room when they entered, and the four were alone. The son, unconscious in a late stage of typhoid fever and scarcely moving, moaned piteously at intervals, as one desiring something he could not express, or seeking for some person he could not find. The mother was sitting beside the bed, and from time to time stroked his forehead, while her eyes never left his unresponsive face. His father went to the foot of the bed, and leaning heavily upon the bedrail, looked at his son with a face in which bitter regret and strong

affection struggled together. Carmichael went to the other side from Mrs. Skinner, and for a while stood silent. Then he looked inquiringly at the father and mother.

'We have spoken to him,' said the father, 'and he does not hear or he cannot answer. His mother has called him by her pet name for him, and if he does not reply to that there is no sound that can reach him. But we would like you to pray for him, and maybe the words of the prayer will find entrance into his soul, and he may still make some sign before he passes into the other world.'

When the elder ceased, the mother leaned forward, putting her lips to her son's ear, and said, 'Robin, Robin, my ain dear bairn! Robin, do you not know me, your mother? You are in your old room, and in your father's house; if you hear me, move your hand,' and she watched the one hand that lay outside the bedclothes. But it was motionless, and the unconscious man only moaned.

Carmichael knelt and prayed; and as was

his wont on such occasions, he called upon the name of the Lord Jesus, the Lover of the human soul and our Brother in every time of adversity, that He would take this one they loved into His safe keeping, body and soul; that if it were the Divine will He would rebuke this fever, as He used to do in the days of Galilee, and give this young man back to his father and mother; that, if this were not the will of God, He would lead him through the valley of the shadow of death, and bring him home, all his sins forgiven and his soul purified, into the Father's house; and that when the sick man heard neither the voice of his father nor mother, Jesus would speak comfortably to him, and that even now his soul might be filled with peace in the Lord.

As Carmichael prayed, the elder and his wife were joining in their hearts, but with their eyes they were watching their son. It seemed to them as if this restlessness were ceasing, and his sunk and drawn face growing peaceful. He breathed more gently, and looked as if he were going to awake.

'He heard, I am sure that he heard that prayer,' and again she called him by name, and wiped his forehead, and moistened his lips, that he might answer her if he could. Still he gave no sign, and the silence in the room was full of awe, for it seemed as if a human soul were passing from their grasp into eternity, desiring to say farewell and not able.

Carmichael stooped down, and in a clear and penetrating voice said into the dying man's ear, 'Jesus—Christ—Saviour.'

When he had said this twice a subtle change came over the son's face, and he lay in perfect quietness; then Carmichael spoke again, 'Do you believe in the Lord—Jesus—Christ?' And the expression seemed to deepen, and the weariness and the pain to be passing from the pallid and pinched face.

'Robin,' and now the mother spoke, 'my Robin, do you believe in Jesus?'

At the sound of the name of names repeated by the voice of his mother, the bondage of the senses was broken for a brief instant, and Robin twice lifted up his hand.

'See!' cried the mother; 'he has heard me and he is trusting in Jesus.' 'Thank God,' said the father, 'for this great mercy, of which I am not worthy!' and while the mother was still weeping, partly for joy and partly for sorrow, her son, all his wanderings over, passed from the home on earth to the home in heaven.

Mr. Skinner was not given to the reading of Browning, but Carmichael showed him a certain passage in 'A death in the Desert,' and the elder had it printed, and it hangs in his room to this day. But only Carmichael and his wife know the reason.

'Then the Boy sprang up from his knees, and ran,
Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought,
And fetched the seventh plate of graven lead
Out of the secret chamber, found a place,
Pressing with finger on the deeper dints,
And spoke, as 'twere his mouth proclaiming first,
"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

'Whereat he opened his eyes wide at once,
And sat up of himself, and looked at us;
And thenceforth nobody pronounced a word.'

A DOMESTIC DIFFERENCE

VI

A Domestic Difference

'YES, I am in trouble, big black trouble,' said Mrs. Sprott, after the briefest preliminaries. 'I felt I must go to some person, and I thought it best to come to you; for you said, you know, if you could help any person in a strait you would do it, and I'm sure I'm in one.' Mrs. Sprott broke down openly, and dabbed her eyes with an absurd little handkerchief, fit only for a baby, as is the way with women.

Carmichael walked over to the window to allow his visitor to recover herself, and constructed the situation. As he had not been

long married, and continued to the end a lover, he took the most sympathetic interest in love affairs and newly-married people. He used to go and bless each home when it was opened, and did his best, in an unconventional fashion, to establish each family on pure love and the fear of God. Young fellows allowed him to share their hopes when they were trying to win the prize of life, which is love, and girls came to tell him of their engagement next morning. He was a vagrant theologian and scattered himself over many fields, but his most candid critics admitted that he had a hold upon the elementary emotions of humanity. The Sprotts's marriage had been a surprise to him, although before he died Carmichael was never astonished at anything in human affairs.

James MacCluckie Sprott—as regards his middle name, he was called after an eminent father of the Free Kirk, and he therefore used it with punctilious pride—was the most proper and one of the most pedantic men in the

whole congregation of St. Jude's, and Mrs. Sprott was a good-looking, gay-hearted, harum-scarum, but perfectly sound girl whom he had met on his summer holiday at a watering-place. Carmichael was puzzled to know how a girl so unlike the typical Christian worker, which was Sprott's ideal of womanhood, could ever have captivated such a staid and judicious person, and how so bright and winsome a creature could ever have been attracted by such a worthy prig as the good Sprott. The laws of humanity are constantly crossing the breed for the good of society, uniting sobriety and gaiety—the girl of impulsive temper with a man of calm judgment; but those two young people were at extremes, and Carmichael had often speculated about the interior of their *ménage*. He also had said to Kate that if he were a woman he would not have married J. MacCluckie Sprott for a king's ransom. 'But since you are a man, Jack, what about Mildred Sprott?' 'That, Katherine,' said the minister severely, 'is another question, and it

is time you were engaged with your household duties.'

'Tell me what is wrong, Mrs. Sprott; I'm awfully sorry that you are in trouble, but you were right to come to me. That is what we are for. Not baby, I hope; of course not' (as she shook her head and for the moment brightened), 'that child of yours is immense, the strongest and happiest youngster I ever saw, and I am getting to be a judge of babies. And your people all well? That's good. One gets anxious about the old home when it's far away. It can't be your husband, for I saw him last evening at the meeting of the Workers' Association, and he was in splendid form, moving resolutions, and raising points of order—in fact, enjoying himself to his heart's content.'

'But it is just him I've come about,' replied Mrs. Sprott. 'Of course he enjoyed himself last evening, and he told me, as usual, when he came home all the things he had said and done, and how many mistakes he had corrected,

and how he was right and everybody was wrong. But I don't care a button about his committees and his wretched little arguments; it's what he does at home that worries me. It was bad enough at the beginning, but he's growing worse every week, and—and I can't stand it any longer. So before I do anything rash I came to consult you. No, certainly not,' continued Mrs. Sprott, 'there's nothing wrong in James's conduct; there never was such a correct man born since — Enoch or some other of those Old Testament characters. I only wish to goodness he had once done something that he shouldn't, or made a mistake. I don't mean that really, but you understand; he wouldn't have been so fearfully right, and all the world so fearfully wrong.

'You have no idea, Mr. Carmichael, what a maddeningly regular man he is. He rises at seven exactly, waiting till the hall clock strikes, and he has family worship at seven forty-five —what an hour! just like Bradshaw—and of

course the servants are fearfully sick, and when people are staying with us they are never in time, and then James makes that a grievance. He leaves for the office exactly at eight thirty. If the dinner is two minutes late, he talks about it for days; the lights downstairs are put out at ten, unless he's kept late moving resolutions somewhere. The old newspapers are kept in what he calls "files for reference," and if he sees any of my silk lying loose in the drawing-room, he says it's untidy; he puts every book back in its place after reading, and he is always setting the timepieces at the correct time; and he's got three different top-coats for different temperatures, and he's always correcting your grammar and telling you to say "he" instead of "him," and it's got upon my nerves.

'Now, don't laugh at me, Mr. Carmichael, and don't speak, for I'm not done; if that were all I wouldn't come bothering you, for of course nobody's perfect—do you know I've got some faults myself?' and Mrs. Sprott

smiled bewitchingly. 'But James carries what he's pleased to call—he has a perfect stock of this kind of language—"the principle of order" into the house affairs. He says that everything should be paid for when it's bought, except food, and that should be settled every week. And goodness knows I've no objection to that; I think it's quite right, for you know where you are then, don't you? It's the way he does it which irritates me. On Saturday morning he sits down at the table in a little room he calls his study, and I have to bring him the house books for the week, then he adds them up, and gives me money to pay them; but just fancy, he will go ranging up and down the books to find what the different pieces of meat cost, why we had more cabbages one week than another. To hear him on the price of tea is enough to make you sick; he has recently found out a kind at 1*s.* 11¾*d.* if you take a quantity. It's Indian tea, and I'm sure it will make us ill, and I tell him it's far better to have China tea—don't you

think so yourself? China tea has a better flavour.'

Carmichael explained briefly that he didn't know one tea from another, but in loyalty to Mrs. Sprott he was willing to believe that if a person took Indian tea in preference to Chinese, his palate must be beyond contempt, and even his sanity was not beyond question; Carmichael suggested, however, that she should go on with her story.

'Where was I?' exclaimed Mrs. Sprott. 'Oh, yes, I know, about the special bills. Well, he gives me so much money one Saturday to do for the next week, as I have to pay them at the time, then I have to show the bills and the money I have over, and he strikes what he calls a balance,' and Mrs. Sprott mentioned the word 'balance' with keen dislike. 'You may guess,' and Mrs. Sprott looked confidently at the minister, 'that the money is always wrong. Sometimes it's only a shilling or two, but last week it was nearly a pound, and I'm sure I don't know what

happens to it. There's something called discount he says I ought to get, but you know when the tradespeople don't offer it, how am I to know? Don't you think they're rather tricky? I do, and I'm sure they don't always give me the right change. Sometimes, too, I buy things in passing—fruit, you know, or maybe a pair of gloves—and I forget to put them down, so the whole account is wrong. We get to wrangling; James tells me that I have no head, and that my mother ought to have taught me domestic economy. Then I get cross—I have a wee bit of a temper—and I told him last week that he should have married a book-keeper from a dry goods store, which, of course, was rather horrid; but if you only knew how aggravating he is, sitting at that table, with those dreadful accounts in front of him, and little piles of money! I could sweep them all on the floor with my hand.

'I am afraid, Mr. Carmichael, all this is boring you, but there is something I must tell

you, or else you won't understand what I am going through. Within the last month or two James has begun to meddle with the servants, because he has got a craze that they are wasteful. He was lecturing the housemaid upon the proper use of soap, and said it must always be old, for new soap was extravagant. He wanted to have the quantity that was given to her every month—for the bedrooms, you know, and things—written down in a book. How he can tell about soap, I don't know; he seems to have studied everything under the sun, especially the things no self-respecting man should know anything about. That wouldn't have mattered much, for the housemaid is a good-natured girl, and I'm quite sure just laughs at him when he lectures on soap. But what did he do last week? Just fancy! he went down to the kitchen and questioned the cook—whom I'm afraid of, I tell you quite frankly—what she did with the dripping, and how much coals the kitchen range burned in a week.

'IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW AGGRAVATING HE IS!'

'You will not believe me, I am sure, but he wants the cook to weigh the coals for the fire, that he may know what the cost of cooking the food is. Of course she was simply frantic, and when he was leaving the kitchen she pinned a small dishcloth to his coat-tail, and he came into the drawing-room with it on. That is how I found out where he had been, for I thought he was in the study getting ready resolutions for you and those poor visitor people. Besides, the cook gave notice next morning, and said she would never stay in any house where the master didn't know his own place. She declared also —and I couldn't help laughing, though it's really no fun for me—that she would rather be a negro slave than weigh the coals in a pair of scales, and that no Christian man should ask such a thing of any woman.' Carmichael was so edified by this amazing illustration of MacCluckie Sprott's thoroughness in detail and genius for meddling, that he did not feel himself able to offer any remark at this stage.

And the indignant young wife swept on to her conclusion:

'You can't imagine what I feel, and how I'm fretted every day. Why, I've been hours and hours trying to make the money and the accounts fit. One day I took the horrid book and threw it into the fire, I was so angry with it; you would think I was a fool because I can't add figures, and one day he spoke as if I wasn't honest. Perhaps I'm a silly, but my patience is gone. What I feel is, that I'm not a wife, but just a housekeeper, and not a very good one, according to him, at that; so I've written a letter to father telling him that I'm coming home. I don't mean quite separation, you know, but just for a little while, to see whether that will bring James to his senses, and get him out of those disgusting ways of balances and "principles of order" and all the other nonsense. I know that one should never tell outside what happens in a home, for I heard you say that at a marriage service, but then one may go to a minister, and I thought

I would take your advice before I sent away the letter.'

'You were quite right, Mrs. Sprott, to come to me in the circumstances,' said Carmichael gravely, for he saw how deeply the poor girl had been wounded, and how keen was her humiliation; 'and I'm very glad you did so, for you must on no account post that letter. Unless in the most desperate circumstances—and yours are not quite that, you know—a wife must not let any one come in between her husband and herself. You may be sure I'm not going to meddle, but I would like to comfort you as much as possible, and you know, I hope, without my saying it, that I quite sympathise with you in this queer trial you are passing through. Still, things might be worse. Just let us see; and imagine, Mrs. Sprott, that you are answering questions out of a catechism. Your husband always does provide enough money, and you have never any fear, as some young wives have, that they cannot make ends meet, and that some day

they may have to leave their pretty little home?'

'There is no fear of that with James; he's the most saving and careful creature you could find in the whole city. He told me only last week that he had invested some money for baby — just imagine! the little man is a shareholder, if that's what you call it, in the something - or - other railway, I can't remember what.'

'Quite so, and your husband is not a lazy man, who pays no attention to his business, and I don't think, so far as I can hear, that he has many bad habits.'

'I should think not! Why, James is fit to be a minister, like that dreadful man MacCluckie that started his name. I'll give my word that there's not a better-living man in the whole city, and as for work, why, I can hardly get him to take a holiday; he says he must get his business established, so that baby and me—oh, bother! I should have said "I"—may be quite safe if—I hate to

hear him talk like this—anything happened to him.'

'That is very satisfactory. And is his temper very hasty, and does he fly out at you occasionally? Pardon me, this is a catechism, you know.'

'Temper! I never knew a man have so little or have such a hold of himself; he vexes me about the accounts, as I told you, and by all that wretched exactness, and by his little lectures, but he has never said one really cross word to me. He's just splendid that way, and when there's any little thing goes wrong, like pipes bursting or bother about your carriage going to the seaside, he's most managing. I've got the temper, you know, and I may tell you that when I'm in a wax he's gentleness itself.'

'The only other thing that occurs to me to ask is this, Does he forget your marriage day or your birthday? Would he bring home something for such occasions?' And as he asked this question Carmichael

had the air of a man who had heard things.

'How curious you should ask that! For though James is so dead against extravagance, and is always preaching that they who go slowly go surely—that's one of his sayings, you know—he gave me a pair of the loveliest brushes with silver backs, real silver, you know, and art figures, for my birthday, and a perfect duck of a ring to commemorate our marriage day. And he said—but I'm not going to tell that to anybody.' And it was plain that Mrs. Sprott was smoothing her ruffled plumes.

'Well, Mrs. Sprott, instead of putting the letter in the post-office, and making two homes miserable, and instead of you going back to your father and wishing you hadn't done so as soon as you had left the station, you will just give me the letter. That it? So. Now we'll watch it burn, and there it has all ended in smoke. You are very much in love with your husband, who is only a man like the rest

of us, and has his failings. But you know he will never disgrace you, he will keep a good roof above your head, he will compass you with attention, and you will be proud of much work which he does for the good of his fellow-men. Mrs. Sprott, I venture to suggest that you give him a very warm welcome when he comes home to-night, and that you tell him next Saturday that you are simply going to work like a tiger at those accounts, and that as he's a good business man, you are going to ask him to help you.'

'What an impossible and howling ass MacCluckie is, to be sure!' said Carmichael to himself when Mrs. Sprott had departed. 'And yet he's a decent and well-meaning ass, and not an ass in business either, or in morals. She's a delightful girl, although I dare say she's a trifle disappointing with the household books, but she has plenty of sense and a sound stock of pride. Suppose'—Carmichael concluded his soliloquy—'we try an experiment.' And so he wrote a note

to Sprott asking him to call on his way home, as he wished to speak to him about Church affairs.

'Much obliged to you for looking in, and saving me a walk out to your house, though it's an immense temptation, I may tell you, to have half an hour's talk with your wife. If I may be allowed to say so, she is one of the brightest and most charming girls that I know, and I am certain every person has the same opinion. It must be pleasant for you to hear, as no doubt you do, so many nice things said about her. But that wasn't what I was going to talk about. It was about the motion you have tabled for Monday evening, which I am afraid will cause some division in the committee.'

'Very likely it will, Mr. Carmichael; but I was looking over several books of order last night, and I am quite confirmed in my opinion, that mine is the only course in keeping with the law of the Kirk, and, as I am prepared also to argue, with the rules of business.

But before we go into that matter allow me to express my appreciation of the remarks you were good enough to make regarding Mrs. Sprott. She is—though it may not become me to say so—all that you have mentioned, and her disposition is as excellent as her appearance is—well, agreeable.'

'Agreeable! why, she's lovely! You have a jolly home, in fact, Sprott, and if you knew the misery inside some families where the wife and husband don't pull together, you would thank God even more than you do for such a blessing as He gave you in your wife and that baby, who is just A1.'

'Yes,' replied Mr. Sprott, 'we are very happy, and I trust that I am grateful; of course, as an old divine says, there's a crook in every lock, and if we hadn't some little trial we should have no discipline for our souls. You are not to understand that there is anything seriously wrong in our family life, but it is curious you should have touched on the matter; there is just a very slight

difference, which I would like to speak to you about. You will, of course, regard this communication as absolutely confidential, for I am certain that Mrs. Sprott would be most indignant if she knew that I had mentioned it; it's the last thing that she would do herself.' And when Carmichael indicated that he was a deep well into which every word sank and disappeared out of sight and recall, MacCluckie Sprott pursued his measured course.

'It would be unpardonable to occupy your time with details, but I may say, in a word, that in my weekly revisal of household accounts I have found Mrs. Sprott occasionally more than slightly inaccurate, and also sometimes very unwilling to enter into my methods of domestic management. Nor has she always supported me as I expected her to do when I was giving the servants some directions, in their particular departments, which I judged wise and useful. As regards petty cash, Mrs. Sprott does not know what it means."

'Gracious goodness!' cried Carmichael—he ought not to have used such expressions, but he was far too much of a layman—springing to his feet and looking with really unfeigned amazement at Sprott's formal figure and self-sufficient countenance, 'do you mean to tell me that you bother yourself with the house accounts, and that you instruct the servants in their duties? James MacCluckie Sprott, you're not a man, you're a marvel; the like of you could not be found in the city. A man who could do such things could command the British Navy, or square the circle. Do you know, I should like to shake hands with you, but I do not feel I am worthy.

'Joking!' continued Carmichael, for Sprott was regarding him with great amazement, 'do you imagine I would jest on a subject so serious? Honestly, I am lost in admiration of your capacity. One understands how you can put our committees right if you can manage your cook and keep the household accounts.'

'But what do you—do?' stammered Sprott, whose world seemed to be breaking up. 'I don't mean you personally, Mr. Carmichael, but the heads of households generally.'

'What do I do?' Carmichael cried in huge delight. 'Oh, I'll tell you that without hesitation—exactly what every other sensible man does, unless he is a genius, of course. As soon as we came home from our marriage tour, which was ten days and not very far, my wife and I came to an agreement about the division of labour. I was to attend to the Church and she was to look after the home. I was to provide the money and she was to spend it. We established a bank account and I paid in everything into it; she draws out what is needed and pays all the accounts. It's as simple as day; all great inventions are, like the screw, you know. I've never given a thought to money since I was married. The only bother is when my wife forgets to give me money for the car, and I have to pay in postage-stamps; and one day I had to go out

to the country to see a sick person, and as I had only ninepence the railway clerk took my watch-chain for a pledge. There will always be some little inconveniences, you know, Sprott, with every scheme. Petty cash! It's I who get the petty cash, but I render no account, just go and ask for more.' And at the sight of Sprott, who was now speechless, and at the thought of that extremely exact and punctilious person getting his few pennies for the day, and otherwise leaving his worldly substance in the hands of Mrs. Sprott, Carmichael chuckled aloud.

'Look here, Mr. Sprott, speaking quite seriously, that is what I do. But every man has his own way, and this is what I would recommend to you, just for an experiment. Give your wife a generous monthly allowance —generous, mark you—and put her on her mettle to work the house economically, and then see how it comes out at the end of three months. It will do her a jolly lot of good

to have the responsibility and it will save you ever so much worry. That's my advice as an aged married person, just approaching his golden wedding, or, to speak quite truthfully, who has found two years' married life on this principle a tremendous success.'

MacCluckie Sprott gave no promise, but he left considerably impressed, and Carmichael at odd moments wondered what had happened, and then was beginning to forget the incident, when Mrs. Sprott one morning burst into his study overflowing with delight and self-satisfaction.

'Do you remember, Mr. Carmichael, when I called upon you one morning, and filled this study with my cowardly clamour about the cook and the petty cash, and threatened to do all kinds of horrid things if James interfered any more with the accounts? I dare say you have forgotten all about it, but I haven't, and I've always been rather ashamed of bothering you, and telling secrets; but I want to let you know that everything is quite changed now in

the domestic economy and petty cash department, and I've scored a rattling success. You really want to know about it? Well, that's very good-natured of you, and here's the whole story of the transformation scene in six words, or as near to six as a woman ever gets. Three months ago exactly last Saturday, when I went into the study after breakfast and was sicker than I had ever been in my life, for I knew there were half a dozen mistakes at least, James hardly looked at the accounts, and then told me he was going to leave the whole management of the house in my hands, and pay so much money into the bank in my name, and that I was to manage it as carefully as possible, and let him see at the end how much I'd saved. Mr. Carmichael, I declare I almost fainted; and when he said he would help me any time I wanted to add up figures, and that he wasn't going to ask any questions, and that he believed I would turn out an A1 housekeeper, I confess to you I simply rimped round that old study. Of

course I kissed him, and he looked quite another man going down the street—gay and jaunty, you know.'

'Well?' said Carmichael?

'The three months are up; Jim says he was never better fed in all his life; the cook stayed on after all, for she's a good sort if she isn't ragged; and guess how much I have over? Can't you? Eleven pounds fifteen and sixpence halfpenny. I'm awfully proud of that halfpenny. You never saw any man so pleased as Jim looked when he knew that all the accounts were paid and saw the bank-book. And he is good; he has ordered me to spend that eleven pounds on anything I like for myself, and I am going to have such a dream of a frock, pink silk with gauze over, and lace, besides other things, all in remembrance of my first real housekeeping. Life is so different and Jim is ever so much nicer, doesn't talk about principles at all, and hardly ever argues.

'I wonder,' said Mrs. Sprott, catching a

gleam in Carmichael's eye—'no, I am sure you didn't break confidence; but you may have spoken to him on your own account. I am certain that you did. Oh, you can't imagine how happy you have made two people.' And Mrs. Sprott went off with a light heart to buy that frock.

THE POWER OF THE CHILD

VII

The Power of the Child

AMONG the personalities in St. Jude's Church was one who stood alone, if he did not stand out, and who had a place of distinction, if it was not freely coveted. While he was rich, there were other men richer; while he was able in affairs, there were other men abler; while he was a regular attender at worship, there were others as regular; while he was perfectly respectable in life, there were others quite as respectable. But by general agreement there was no one so thoroughly, consistently, perseveringly, ingeniously mean. He was the hardest man within the Church, and it would have been

difficult to find his rival within the city. His seat rent he paid promptly, but refused to take more than one sitting at the end of a pew, and on one occasion suggested that he ought to receive discount, because he did not take a little credit, as other seat-holders through sheer forgetfulness were apt to do.

To the Sustentation Fund, the chief effort in St. Jude's, he sent one pound a year instead of fifty, which was the amount shrewd financial managers assessed him at; and when a moving appeal was made to increase the fund, and to raise the salaries throughout the land on account of the increased rate of living and the higher scale of wages, Murchieson admitted the force of the argument and raised his contribution from one pound to twenty-five shillings. He declined in opprobrious terms to give anything to foreign missions, because he believed that any heathen who became a Christian did it for what he was to get, and he would give no countenance to the home mission enterprise of St. Jude's, because, he

argued, if working men would give up drinking and general wasting they would be as well off as he was, and could pay for sittings for themselves. To the daily collection he gave exactly threepence, at morning service, and nothing in the afternoon, and he was known to have changed money on the road to church upon discovering that the smallest coin in his purse was a sixpence.

His economy outside Church life, through long practice and the exercise of an acute intellect, amounted to genius, and the stories about his nearness flew from mouth to mouth in the city: how he would go out of his way and deliver a note with his own hands to save the penny stamp; how he would go down to town on the top of a 'bus and with a stiff neck when the rain was pouring, to save an extra halfpenny for travelling inside; how he threatened to prosecute a mercantile association of which he was a member, because when it was wound up the balance was handed over to a hospital—his share being thirteen

shillings and twopence-halfpenny ; how he sold the clothes of a deceased elder brother to a pawnbroker ; and how, having obtained a few geraniums for his little garden from a generous neighbour, he disposed of them for a consideration to another neighbour. He became in course of time the model and standard of parsimony, so that men's faces lit up with cynical amusement at his appearing, and any new achievement of meanness was cheerfully and instantly assigned to Murchieson. Round him gathered an anecdotage of shabby inventions and miserly tricks.

It was exactly the type of character—cold, calculating, ungenerous, inhuman—which offended and irritated Carmichael beyond every other ; and among other foolish things, the minister said, fortunately only in private, this wild word, that he had more hope of the drunkard for the kingdom of God than of a miser, and that he would have been less disgusted if he had met Murchieson coming home from a Burns' dinner, singing aloud,

than he was when Murchieson objected on a principle of management to give to the support of the Royal Infirmary. Murchieson was so much in Carmichael's mind that he became an offence and an obsession. Generally he was angry with the old man; occasionally he was sorry for him; he was always helpless with him. From his place at the end of the pew he stood out from the rest of the congregation, hard, gray, forbidding, like a jagged rock emerging from the dancing, shining water, and exercised a paralysing influence upon a sensitive preacher. Any argument for liberality was shivered to pieces on that iron front, and any appeal to sentiment withered before that contemptuous eye.

Murchieson got upon the minister's nerves, and threatened to be a blight upon his speaking, as when a frost nips the apple-blossom. As often as he used an illustration of the affections, he caught, as it were, the old man saying 'Balderdash!' and as often as he exalted high ideals he seemed to hear Murchieson's

cynical chuckle. When he tried to climb Murchieson clutched him with his lean talon, and pulled him back to the sordid commonplace, and he dared not give place to the mystical even for a minute without apologising to that champion of realism. Browbeaten by the tyranny of fact, Carmichael found himself commending Christianity on grounds of profit and loss, and eulogising godliness because it conduced to thrift and the accumulation of capital. When Carmichael started his holiday scheme, by which the children of the city were to get a fortnight in the country, he offered a private and cowardly petition in his secret devotions that Jacob Murchieson should be absent that morning from church—not seriously ill, but detained by a cold in his head. It was not answered. Jacob never had colds, being as impervious to the weather as he was to emotion, and objected on principle to all illness, because it lent itself to doctors' bills and hindered from business. Of course he was in his place, more visible and asser-

STOOD OUT FROM THE REST—HARD, GRAY, FORBIDDING.

tive, more unsympathetic and scornful, more commanding and vigilant, than ever. During the psalm before sermon Carmichael was much tossed in his mind, and knew not what to do. With Murchieson's eye upon the pulpit like the artillery of a fortress trained upon some poor trading-vessel, how could one even dare to mention so unmercantile and unprofitable a scheme as country holidays for city children, and what spirit could one have to ask for solid silver and gold on the basis of such feeble sentiment?

As he spoke he imagined Murchieson's running commentary, and the points that he would triumphantly make. Why didn't the parents pay themselves for their children's holidays, and what did poor people mean by having so many children? He was not a poor man, but he had never seen his way to marry, and if he had no time or money to waste on such a luxury, much less had a man on five-and-twenty shillings a week. If the brats were sent from home and let loose

in the country, they would get into more mischief even than in the city, and being beyond control, would be certain to do damage to property. Would not the sight of the children going for a whole fortnight on holiday excite vain thoughts in the minds of their parents, and suggest that they should have more holidays? The next thing would be that working-men would be wishing to spend a fortnight in the country, and when that day came national ruin was not far off. As for himself, he took New Year's Day, and that was more than sufficient, and he always regarded the Bank Holidays as a personal grievance. Would it not be far better for children to be working, and so learn habits of industry? Was not all this foolish nonsense about recreation just a premium upon laziness? Why should anybody have holidays—wasn't Sabbath enough time for resting? And why should he have to pay for other people's holidays when he had to scrape in order to get his own living—'scraping' was Jacob's

favourite description of his business toil? Had preachers no knowledge of life, and was the pulpit to be for ever a fountain of washy sentiment and deleterious twaddle?

Carmichael already shivered and began to lose heart as he felt the cold spray of utility falling on his poor words, and the heat being frozen out of them. As a man hot in temper and impatient with meanness, he was tempted to strike out and to denounce the Murchieson type, so as to secure an emotion of indignation, if he could not sustain an emotion of compassion. If he had yielded to this impulse, as too often he did, the sermon would have been a masterpiece of sarcasm, tickling the congregation like mustard upon the palate and hardening Jacob into adamant, and doing not the slightest good to the end in view. Fortunately, his mind, lying open to the breath, of God's Spirit, was blown in another direction, and he looked on Murchieson through the medium of a gentler atmosphere. A feeling of genuine sorrow swept over his mind for an

old man who had come to seventy years of age and never had known the sweetness of love, who was out of touch with children and a stranger to kindness, to whom life was nothing else than a weary grind and purposeless money-making.

The sight of Murchieson that day, instead of irritating, gentled Carmichael, and gave to his speech that accent of compassion which arrests and conciliates and conquers the most indifferent hearers. When he unfolded his scheme for giving a happy time in the country to poor bairns, and described the result of a private experiment made the year before, the congregation was distinctly touched, and if Carmichael had been asking the money by an offertory he would suddenly have closed his sermon at a certain point five minutes before the terminus. When hard-headed, unemotional men stare fixedly at the roof of the church or fall victims to a violent cold in the head, before the preacher's eyes, if there be any practical wisdom in him, he will fling over two

fetching illustrations and the most finished of perorations and send round the plate. When the tide is at its height is the time to make for the harbour. It seemed to him, as he was speaking, that even Murchieson looked less glacial than usual, and in the evening he hugged the thought, though he considered it pure fancy, that Murchieson at that moment had nearly broken down. It was, of course, pure fancy, but pleasant to dwell upon, like the visions of Utopia or the prophecies of the millennium.

That master of economy was so much in the minister's thoughts that he was not absolutely surprised when Murchieson called on him next morning, and he was still so affected by his play of fancy that Carmichael asked his wife, before going into the study, how much she thought Jacob would give to the Children's Holiday Fund. Kate, with more shrewdness than charity, declared her belief that the visitor had come to remonstrate with the minister on account of this new fad, which

would only pauperise the people, and her conviction that, if for a wonder he gave anything, the furthest limit would be two-and-sixpence. She also freely described him as 'a disgusting old skinflint,' and suggested that her husband should deal with him as he deserved, and that she would be glad afterwards to hear his adjectives. Which was only one out of a hundred proofs that Kate was not a model wife for a minister, but that is a story I should like to tell some other day. Carmichael was still under the glow of yesterday, and in a fit of enthusiasm assessed Jacob at ten shillings.

'Ye no doubt are aware, Mr. Carmichael,' began Jacob, with the briefest preliminaries of courtesy, which he always regarded as a waste of time, 'that I have little sympathy with what are called missionary and philanthropic schemes. The one half of them are got up to pay officials, who go about the country havering to fifty old women at a public meeting, and who had better be earning their living as

clerks at two pounds a week. And the other half exist to keep shiftless folk in idleness, who are fonder of singing hymns than working with their hands. When I think o' the money that's been given to convert tha Jews, I canna help laughing; it's positively facetious. I'm told that there's a new society started by three ministers and seven old maids, to provide spectacles and false teeth for people out of work. I'm not a subscriber myself, and when one of the collectors called on me I gave her my judgment—politely, of course. But that is neither here nor there, and that is not what I called about.' Carmichael was relieved to hear that this was not the object of Jacob's visit, but he was not specially encouraged by the opening.

'Well, ye see,' resumed Murchieson, 'in ordinary circumstances, and acting on general principles, I would not be inclined to look favourably on that holiday proposal, but there are one or two points I didna dislike, especially the plan o' the parents giving so much them-

selves. So I called to get some information on details, and if I am satisfied—for I make that condition—I might not be averse to consider the question of contributing, say, ten shillings.'

Carmichael, cheered by this wintry sunshine and anxious to approach Jacob upon the more susceptible side of his mind, plunged into facts and figures.

'Every child,' and Carmichael addressed Murchieson as if he were a public meeting, 'will be selected six months before the time, and the pence of the parents will be collected every week; they will be expected to have the child clean and decent when the time comes, and every child will be examined by a doctor. Ladies in the country will select the homes, and will see that they are healthy and respectable; they will also receive the children and supervise them when they are in the country. The cost of board, including milk, will be six-and-sixpence a week, which makes thirteen shillings; the railway companies

are to give special rates which will average one-and-ninepence, and adding threepence for general expenses, you have fifteen shillings, which will be the total cost per child for a fortnight's holiday.' As Carmichael spoke, he knew that he was clear, but he also felt that he was not effective and that somehow he was missing the mark. Murchieson had listened attentively, but did not seem to have been impressed or carried forward; he was willing to criticise, as a matter of course, but gave Carmichael the impression that he was waiting for other arguments.

'Your arrangements seem wiselike; ye might possibly get the board in the country reduced to six shillings, but the danger in that case would be watering the milk, which is undesirable. If ye got a large trader to tackle the railway people, I wouldna say but that they would knock a penny or maybe three ha'pennies off the return fare. But I reserve judgment on those particulars, and I will hear you to the end.' Then it came to Carmichael,

and he counted it an inspiration like that of yesterday, that he might take Jacob more successfully by surprise, as a fortress is often captured on its strongest side. So he threw figures and committees to the wind and laid out the human side before his visitor.

'Very likely you are right, Mr. Murchieson, and I will mention any suggestions you give to the committee, for I am not an adept in business affairs. It is the contrast between the slum of the city and the joy of the country which, I confess, has touched my heart, for I am a countryman; I love its hills and glens, and fields and flowers, and running burns and hedgerows, with the honeysuckle and the roses in the middle of the hawthorn. With that vision before my eyes, and the sweet smell of the country in my nostrils, I go into a court of the city and I see a child living, or rather dying, in a house of a single room, without air and sun, and playing in a dirty court instead of on the grass, and beside a gutter instead of a stream of clean water. When they make a

toy out of a tin box, and trail it along the noisome court, making believe it's a cart, and sail a little stick in a dirty puddle, I feel that they are children too, and that they have never had a chance of child-life.'

For the moment he had forgotten himself and his environment; but now he started and looked round, expecting to see a sneer on his visitor's face, and to be crushed by some contemptuous reference to the improvidence of the poor. But Murchieson did not seem inclined to mock or to argue; you would have almost said that he was concerned and touched, if you had seen his face while the minister gave his brief etching of child misery in a city. When Carmichael finished and turned almost in deprecation, Murchieson waited to see if he had more to say, and when nothing came, he took up the talking.

'Put me down for a pound.'

There was a decision in the tone and an expression on the face which arrested and encouraged Carmichael. Perhaps it was

springtime for Jacob, and the winter was going to pass. Who knew but that a work of grace had begun in the old man's heart, and that he also was a son of Abraham? It was worth trying at any rate, so the minister started afresh.

'We had an experiment last year, and it would have pleased you to see how the expectation of the holiday blessed those homes of poverty. The children who were chosen to go worked hard at school, and were always talking about the flowers they had never seen, and their mothers did their little best to get their clothes ready and put them in decent repair. They also set themselves to clean their houses and to make themselves more tidy, so as to be in keeping with the children. They were wild with anxiety that their bairns should not be put to shame by others because they were dirty or ragged. We saw that every child had some sort of a modest outfit, and you may laugh at me, Mr. Murchieson, for I must take the blame for this foolishness, but

we gathered some old toys that they might take them into the country—boats for the boys and dolls for the girls—and I collected myself a dozen old parasols, for the lasses, you know.' He had no sooner said 'parasol' than Carmichael trembled, for he felt that his case was lost. The idea of the economist supporting a scheme which embraced the provision of parasols for slum girls, even although the parasols cost nothing, was quite preposterous. But Murchieson neither jeered nor protested; as a matter of fact, Carmichael had never seen him look so gracious before.

'Make it five,' said Jacob, and Carmichael knew for certain that the wind of Heaven was with him, and that he must not miss his opportunity.

'You should have seen the little band go off from the station last July, with their luggage—I shall never forget that—in band-boxes and paper bags and fruit baskets and soap boxes, but each one was as proud as Punch of his belongings. And every bairn as clean as a

brass pin, and every bit of clothes well brushed and darned. If you'd seen the care the lasses took of their parasols and the laddies of their boats and balls and bats and other clam-jamery! Every mother was there with one or two relatives to see the expedition off. They gave something like a cheer, you bet, as the train began to move, and I declare you would have thought that the look of cunning and of hardness had passed from the faces of those city arabs, as if the distant breath of the country were already touching them. Mr. Murchieson,' said Carmichael, with fearsome hardihood, 'you would have liked to be there.'

'I would,' said Jacob, with unmistakable decision; 'make it ten.'

There was no doubt now that Murchieson was improving, and Carmichael, licking his lips, started off afresh.

'When the bairns were half-way through their holiday I went down to see them, and I count that the best trip I have had for many

a year. As I climbed the road from the station some one called me by name from the overhanging bank, and looking up, behold, four lasses from our mission-school. They were flushed with health and browned by the sun and full of innocent joy. One had a necklace of buttercups, that had taken hours to make, another had a coronet of wild roses, the third had a bunch of flowers she was taking back as a present to her country mother in the cottage where she lived, and the fourth had dug up some primrose-roots which were going back to the city with her. "Isn't this grand, Maister Carmichael!" and she threw me down a spray of honeysuckle.'

'I mind the honeysuckle on the road I gaed to schule,' remarked Murchieson. 'I'm no sure that I've seen honeysuckle since that day; at ony rate, I never noticed it.'

'Where do you think I found the laddies?' cried Carmichael in triumph, for he knew now that principalities and powers in the heavenly places were with him, and that Jacob had been

given as a spoil into his hands. 'Of course at the burn side, and they were in their glory doing themselves proud to the top hole. Some of them were busy on a dam, and I tell you pretty tidy work. Poor little chaps! they are going to be men of their hands when they get a chance. Others had made a harbour further up for their boats, and they were loading them with gravel for corn and sailing them down the dam from America to Scotland. Every little scamp was as fresh as a daisy, and when I saw them working in that pure, wholesome water, I assure you, Mr. Murchieson, I nearly cried for joy, and I thanked God that they were having fourteen days of the burn instead of the gutter. But maybe you're laughing at me for my foolishness.'

'I'm not,' said Jacob fiercely; 'how dare you say that to me! There was a burnie round by my mother's cottage, but it's mair than fifty years sin' I biggit a dam. Make it twenty.'

'That afternoon,' resumed Carmichael, 'the

whole caboodle went off for an expedition in some carts a good-natured farmer gave, and, there's no use telling lies, Mr. Murchieson, I went with them, and was the worst laddie of the gang. Half of us garrisoned an old castle in a wood, and the other half tried to take it from us, and we had flags and guns and two tin trumpets and an old drum, and I had a cocked hat made out of paper, for I was general-in-command. The lasses played in the wood at "ring-a-ring-a-roses" and their skipping-ropes, and the other things the lassies love, besides washing their dolls' clothes in the burn at the castle foot. We had milk and bread-and-jam for our tea, and went home singing in the carts when the sun was hastening westwards. Then the laddies brought home the cows, and the lasses helped to milk them, and when I left to catch the night train, the last thing I saw was the bairns sound asleep in clean, homely beds, with the fresh air blowing in through the open windows, and their faces

red with health, as if the hand of the Lover of little children had wiped away all the grime of the city from their cheeks, and the sin of the city from their souls.'

'Make it fifty,' shouted Murchieson, who was much excited, 'and a pound extra to buy peppermint-rock!'

'To buy what?' said Carmichael, who now thought that either Murchieson or he was taking leave of his senses.

'Man! div ye not know what peppermint-rock is? There's naething like it, though it's lang sin I tasted it. I'll have some this verra day. And look ye here, Mr. Carmichael; ye want to send a thousand bairns next summer, but you're afraid about the cash; pick your thousand and I'll underwrite the company. Tell me how much is needed above the fifty when ye go to allotment.' And Murchieson departed hurriedly, and marched down the street as if there was a band in front.

'When he ordered that rock, Kate, I knew that the grace of God was exceeding abundant

in the heart of Jacob Murchieson,' said John Carmichael with emphasis, for he also had his weaknesses. 'This is the beginning of a time; we have not heard the last of Jacob.'

He was right, for curious stories began to circulate about Murchieson: that he had increased the salaries of his office staff, and sent one young fellow who had been ill away for a long voyage; that he had undertaken the charge of the widows and children of two firemen who had fallen in the discharge of duty; that he had given a thousand pounds to the building of the children's infirmary, and promised another thousand if they cleared off the debt; that the collection at St. Jude's had a sovereign every morning in the plate, and that the poor's fund had been put in a condition of thorough repair. He offered no explanation and he made no boast, but every month he fed the wonder by some unexpected charity. 'He is not himself; he must be going crazy,' said a merchant who had had dealings in his day with Jacob,

and despaired of any reasonable solution of the mystery. 'It's the first time that he has been himself, I would say,' replied Carmichael. 'This is the real Murchieson, only we didn't know him before, and he didn't know himself.'

A RULER IN ISRAEL

VIII

A Ruler in Israel

DURING his first month at St. Jude's, Carmichael lived in a whirl of unaccustomed circumstances and strange names, but out of this phantasmagoria, Mrs. Grimond emerged at intervals and laid hold of his mind. He had a clear remembrance of a fresh and masterful old face at the social meeting, when he was introduced to the congregation, and never a day passed but she was again introduced to him in conversation. People were sealed for approval because Mrs. Grimond had a great idea of them, and others were regarded as doubtful somewhere because she did not care for them; a minister was

declared to be a good preacher upon her distinct judgment, and another might be a good man but he could not boast of pulpit gifts, for she had dubbed him a 'haverin' body.' Any scheme in the Church had omens of success if Mrs. Grimond thought it wise, but its history was going to be one of hardship if, in her frank opinion, it was 'pairfect nonsense.'

The elders themselves, with all their authority of ordination and dignity of office, could not be indifferent to Mrs. Grimond, and it was whispered that shrewd sayings of hers were quoted in high places, and influenced the decisions of the Session. When Carmichael confessed that he had not yet called on this elect lady, the other man was amazed at his delay, and suggested an immediate visit as one of the measures of practical wisdom in life; he also indicated that until the minister met this particular parishioner, he had not begun to know his parish, and that if he wished to do well by himself and St. Jude's,

he had better put himself quickly and modestly under her guidance. Various imperative duties hindered him from this privilege and honour, and when at last he came to the door of her house he had the feeling of waiting upon a queen, and was quite convinced that the wisdom and energy of the elders and the deacons, the Sunday-school teachers and the district visitors, and all the congregation had for some inscrutable purpose of Providence been gathered up and centred in the person of Mistress Jean Grimond.

Certainly his first impression was deepened when he saw this honourable woman in her chair of state, for she never received any person except when seated on the throne. In the forenoon she was dressed in some soft grey material, touched here and there with pink. She wore a fleecy white shawl, and her cap was a fine compromise between grace and majesty; there was also in it an arrangement of white and pink. Although the oldest woman Carmichael had met, even with his

vast experience of the country, Mrs. Grimond was as erect as an ash-tree, and rarely condescended to lean back in her chair when visitors were present; her complexion was clear and fresh, and neither her cheeks nor her brow had a single wrinkle.

But the dominating feature was her eyes, which were a full blue of the shade of the sky, and they were charged with a fearful insight. They seized you in a moment, as a naturalist might take up a strange animal; they examined you up and down and through and through; they settled what you were and what you could do; they understood what you intended, apart from what you said; and they anticipated your thoughts before you had uttered them.

Before those eyes, as before a flame of fire, hypocrisy, affectation, foolishness, and sentimentality shrivelled up and were consumed. If you were to withstand them, you required a man's courage, and you were not likely to escape unscathed; if you tried in any way to

deceive them, you were certain to be worsted and you would never recover the exposure Whether in days past they had ever melted through love or sorrow, no one knew; no one now saw them weaken or fail; through her long life this indomitable woman had fought her battle without complaining, dominating circumstances and compelling men and women to be her servants.

Without fear and without gentleness, without illusions and without conventions, without any knowledge of sickness or of other weakness, handsome still in her old age, and imperious through her gifts of mind and body, she was the strongest woman one could meet in a month's journey, or for that matter, perhaps, in a lifetime.

After Carmichael had paid his respects—and he almost felt as if he should kneel and kiss her hand—she graciously invited him to take a chair, which was so placed that she could embrace him with her eyes, and Carmichael had no doubt that when the

interview was over he would depart either justified or condemned.

'You are welcome, Mr. Carmichael, and I hope that we shall be good friends; I can, maybe, help you in your work at St. Jude's, for there is little I do not know, and I shall be glad to have your services from time to time through the winter months when I am prevented from going to kirk. I was expecting you to have called before, for I dare say you have heard my name, but I expect you were well employed.' And Carmichael murmured that he had been trying to get hold of the situation and had been visiting the office-bearers and leading workers of the Church.

'That was pairfectly judicious,' said Mistress Grimond, 'for ye have to work with them, and ye must understand your tools. Some of them are able men and have done well for themselves in the city, but have no more religion than a jackdaw; some have plenty of religion and can pray by the yard, but their

HANDSOME STILL IN HER OLD AGE.

brains are porridge; there is a select few who have both sense and religion — pay attention to what they say. There are men who will tell you that there's never been a preacher in Glasgow like you, and compare you to the apostle Paul—thank them, and laugh in your sleeve; there are men who will object to everything you say from the beginning and call ye every kind of heretic —tell them ye're sorry to hear it, and just say the same things next Sabbath. But if ye come across a man of discernment and he gives you a hint, lay it past for your consideration.' As Carmichael was now listening most respectfully, Mrs. Grimond, with a quick glance at him to be sure that the seed was falling into honest soil, continued her advice.

'Consult the elders about everything, and tell them all your plans; some of them are wise —I know three, at any rate; others are little better than fools, but they're harmless; one or two are just half and between. But they are

the ordained elders of the kirk, and they should be respeckit. Besides,' said Mrs. Grimond, with a shrewd gleam in her eyes, if you take them with you in anything, the congregation can't oppose, and if it turns out wrong, ye can let the blame rest on the elders. So far as my obsairvation goes, the best use of elders is to do any little trokes the minister can put upon them, and to stand up for the minister to the people.

'As regairds the congregation,' and Mrs. Grimond, finding the new minister receptive, pursued her didactic course, 'they are a mixed multitude, but you will remember they are your flock, and ye maun do the best by all of them. There are some families ye will draw to by nature—take care that you are not too much at their houses; there are some families ye will hardly be able to bear—see that ye visit them regularly. Have no favourites, or else ye'll get into trouble, and in the end they will turn against you; have no animosities, for they just fret the mind, and set the heather on fire.

You are young, and you are hasty, with a high speerit, I judge, which rides your reason. For any sake, keep your tongue within your teeth, and don't give confidences; watch every man and use every man, and do your duty by every man, but let no man have any word from you that he can use against you, nor let any man hold you in his hand. Get into the saddle as quickly as you can and sit tight, but ride them without the curb if ye can, and without the spurs.

'That is all I have to say to you at present,' concluded her majesty, 'but there may be many other things afterwards. If there is any man ye cannot measure, or any plan ye can't see the drift of, come to me, and I may be wrong, but I judge that I can help you. There may be one or two I have my doubts about, but the rest I can read like print.' And Carmichael was willing to admit that in all probability she was right, and that he would soon be the last book added to her human library.

'Now,' began Mrs. Grimond again, 'it's time

I was telling you about myself, for it may be instructive to hear my history; whether it be good or bad, there's one thing I'm sure of, it has been long. I am ninety-five years old this year 1880, so ye see I was born juist forty years after the rebellion, and four years before the French Revolution. I've had the advantage of seeing the turn of the tide, the old days depart when the kings ruled, and the new days come when the people rule. Everybody cries up democracy nowadays, but I have my thoughts; there were bad kings, but I've never heard that all the people are Solomons; ye could get rid of a daft king—what are you to do with fools of people? I mind the day when the patrons appointed the minister, and now they call that outrageous, so the ministers preach in turns like horses running a race, and the ploughmen judge which they like best. But whether the ploughman be wiser than the laird, it is not for me to say.

'As regards my own religion, Mr. Carmichael,

I've had advantages which are given to few, and which have kept me from beegotry. My grandfather was a Roman Catholic, and the Scots Catholics are a good breed, and my grand-uncle was a priest; there were queer doings after the '45, so my father joined the Established Kirk. He married an Episcopalian, for there were a lot of them about Forfarshire in the Jacobite days, but she went with him, and I was brought up in the Kirk, under Dr. McLarty—a douce and honest man he was, who kept a quiet sough in troubled days and gave no offence to any person. For myself, I married young and we went to the old Kirk till the disruption in 1843. What good that did I pass no opinion, for ye're a Free Kirk minister, and I'm a Free Kirk member. My husband was carried away by Dr. Chalmers, so he joined the Free Kirk, and as I was always an obedient wife'—and the expression on Mrs. Grimond's face at this point was wonderful to behold—'I went with him, and I made no change after his death, which

I always considered was hastened by the Disruption.

'He was a well-doing man,' and the widow spoke of the long-ago deceased with calm detachment, 'and had a good name. We had no words during our married life, for he did his work outside and I did mine inside, and I'll not deny that he deferred very frequently to my judgment. I always considered that he had the root of the matter in him, and I'll say this for him: he always conduckit family worship once a day on weekdays and twice on Sabbath. I said to him it was his duty, and he did it. It would be nonsense to say that Grimond was what they call among the Cameronians and the Seceders and suchlike an exercised Christian, for he would have made a poor show with Simeon MacQuitterick, and that little nest of self-satisfied and meddling bodies which sit in judgment on St. Jude's. MacQuitterick is a cat-witted and cantankerous creature, who sees neither to the right hand nor to the left, and will walk in

a road two feet broad till he breaks his neck in an argument over a precipice.

'By the way, Mr. Carmichael, Simeon and his friends may come buzzing round you, finding fault with your best sermons and asking questions no man can answer. They are like wasps—they make no honey, and they are best pleased when they are stinging; to hear them speak you would think that no person was ever right in Scotland except a handful of Covenanters. When your blood is mixed and ye mind the saints in all the Kirks, ye're not willing to be shut up in a wasp's bike for your religion. Simeon came to visit me once; I said I would be glad to see him again, but he has not returned; I believe he calls me Jezebel.' And Mrs. Grimond seemed much refreshed by this compliment of Simeon's.

While this remarkable woman was always willing to receive the minister, and while she gave him an enormous amount of shrewd advice, she always demanded a professional

repayment. When she had answered his questions and he had satisfied her demands, her majesty then composed herself suddenly in her chair for religious exercises. Leaning back in the slightest degree and veiling the keenness of her eyes with an expression of solemnity, she would fold her hands upon her lap, and address Carmichael in an artificially softened tone: 'Now that is enough of worldly conversation for to-day; say some good words to me, and conclude with prayer; I also expect the Lord's Prayer and the benediction.' An awful silence followed, and Carmichael used to tell his wife that he never conducted a private service with such restraint and difficulty. Mrs. Grimond expected an exposition of Scripture or an exhortation on duty—she did not care which—and one of her conditions was that it should last at least ten minutes; if Carmichael stopped short of that time, which she seemed to know by instinct, he would hear her murmur, 'More good words, if you please, sir; I don't like short measure.'

He was also aware that behind this becoming mask of reverence her keen intellect was weighing every word he said, and her cynical humour playing around him; that any want of connection in his little address or anything like sentiment in his prayer would be instantly detected and despised. The highest praise he could hope for was, 'Very clear and appropriate,' and she might perhaps add, 'I canna bear thae ministers whose expositions are a rimble-ramble of disconnected texts, and who go wandering in their prayers through all the countries o' the world.' When Carmichael suspected that he had fallen into a mood of heated and unhealthy sentiment, he found no better cure than to place himself under the cold spray of Mrs. Grimond's remorseless criticism, but there were times when he could have wished that her keen intellect had been softened by the gentler emotions.

Her family, which consisted of a widowed daughter approaching seventy years of age, and her daughters, who were not in their first

youth, would not have complained if Mrs. Grimond's hand had been lighter and the household *régime* had been more touched by sentiment. It was inevitable that they should call her 'Grannie,' but the word, which suggests weakness and tenderness, was outrageously unsuitable, for Mrs. Grimond was in every sense of the word the head of the household. She used often to explain that her daughter had been a difficult child to rear, and that she had no claims to her own admirable constitution; she was prepared at any time for her removal in what she would consider comparatively early age, and her grand-daughters she treated as absolute children. Neither mother nor daughters were allowed a voice or a share in family affairs. They were only her messengers and assistants, who received instructions and carried them out to the best of their ability, which Mrs. Grimond did more than hint was extremely limited. 'My daughter takes from her father, who was a very worthy man—yes,' she would add reflec-

tively, 'a worthy man, and in many ways we were very well suited to each other.' From which you were left to gather that the late Mr. Grimond had not been endowed with opulence of mind, and that his wife had guided him through the affairs of life. 'I have every respect for his memory,' she would sometimes say, 'and I have no complaint of my married life ; there are women who need a protector, and I judge no widow who marries again, but I have seen no reason to change my estate.'

No one could help admiring her admirable courage and practical capacity, but one was bound to sympathise with her family, who were reduced to the condition of nonentities under her shadow. She retained the keys of the household down to the most insignificant in her iron grasp, regarding them as the sceptre of authority ; she arranged every detail of the household round and ordered every single article which came into the home ; she sent incisive messages to the tradespeople, and

overlooked the servants with an unfailing eye. The little world of the home had its centre in that arm-chair, and before its occupant every one trembled; nothing went on she did not know, and nothing was allowed she did not approve. While it was a great grief to her that she did not arrange the servants' dresses, she dictated to her own belongings what they should wear, and would infallibly detect the smallest independence of personal taste.

Jupiter himself is said occasionally to nod, and Mrs. Grimond had one sign of advanced years. Her eyesight was perfect and her hand as steady as ever; her hearing was fearfully good when anything was being said behind her back, and she had still a firm step. Her memory, extending over such a long range, was amazing in its accuracy, but she sometimes lost perspective and forgot the lapse of time, imagining persons in the early and later periods of her life to be contemporaries.

'The minister of the parish in my girlhood'—and Mrs. Grimond allowed herself the luxury

of reminiscence—'was the Rev. Dr. McLarty. He was a tall and handsome man, who did not run about his parish like a bagman selling buttons, or a tax-gatherer collecting the poor rate. Na, na, there were wiselike clergymen in those days who knew their position and went through their parishes like lords. His word was law in his own business. And why not? Isn't it reason if a doctor gives his prescription, and the people take the medicine, that when a minister tells them their duty they should do it without arguing?

'He baptized me,' continued Mrs. Grimond, 'and he heard me say the Catechism, and he would speak to me on the road. 'Well, Jean, is that you? You are growing a big girl; do what the Bible tells you and you'll grow up to be a good woman, and don't forget your prayers, lassie.' Then he would take a pinch of snuff and go on his way with a stately walk that it was a pleasure to see. I never forgot what he said, Mr. Carmichael, that is how I've come to be what I am.'

And Mrs. Grimond nodded with great complacency.

'Ay, and he married me, and that was not yesterday, for I was just twenty the month before. It was a fine ceremony, and he gave Grimond some very sound advice, which I used to bring from time to time to his mind. He told him that he had obtained a most valuable gift in his wife, and that he must show himself worthy of her; that he must work hard to provide a respectable home for her, and that he would never regret it if he consulted his wife in everything. No man ever had the marriage state put better before him than Grimond, and I'm bound to say that with a little assistance from me he discharged his duty. Dr. McLarty was a wise man and very genial—oh, ay, he could unbend on a proper occasion. After the service was over he sat down at the breakfast, and afore a' was done he sang the 'Laird o' Cockpen'; that was his custom on such occasions, and

very pleasant. There's a time to pray, Mr. Carmichael, and there's a time to sing, and the old ministers could do both, and they knew when. But you would know Dr. McLarty yourself'—and this was Mrs. Grimond's lapse—'he would be about your time; I wouldna say but he might be at college with you.'

As Dr. McLarty had had the honour of marrying Mrs. Grimond in the year 1805, and was then a gentleman of about seventy years of age, and it was now 1885, if Carmichael had been his college contemporary, the minister of St. Jude's would have occupied a premier position for longevity in modern times, and might fairly have claimed a place with the fathers before the Flood. When he delicately explained that Dr. McLarty was somewhat in advance of him, Mrs. Grimond would awake to the sense of the past and present, and adroitly change the subject, glancing round to see whether any of the family had detected this *faux pas*.

Her hand was so heavy and the domestic world suffered so much from the unceasing change of servants, who came hopefully and departed full of indignation at the close of a month—if, indeed, they were not dismissed on an hour's notice by this unrelenting despot—that the health of her daughter was breaking down, and Carmichael thought it his duty to intervene. He was warned that it was taking his life in his hands, and that notwithstanding all he had seen of her majesty and all he had heard from her lips, he had no idea what she was in the sacred department of family government, and with what feelings she regarded an intruder. But he was young, and had the confidence which is rich in early years, and departs with a sadder experience of life; so he resolved to make the venture, and he arranged in his own mind a method of cunning diplomacy.

'Well, Mrs. Grimond,' after she had given him the very opportunity he desired by relating the last exasperating incident in the kitchen,

'this is very disappointing and worrying, and I quite agree with you that the servants in the city to-day are not what the servants used to be in the country. But, my dear friend, I would not vex myself about those girls, or about anything else; you have a devoted and capable daughter, to say nothing of your grandchildren; you have brought them up with great care, and I know how grateful they are to you. You have borne the heat and burden of a long day, and now you are surely entitled to a little rest. If I were you, I would give the whole charge of the house into their hands, and then you will have plenty of time to give me the advice I need about St. Jude's, and to do any kind of little work which you like.'

'Do I understand you clearly, Mr. Carmichael?' and the minister did not quite like her accent. 'Is it your advice as my clergyman that I should hand over my keys, which I have held since the day I was married, and which are lying beside me in this basket,

and let this house be managed by my daughter and those two young girls? And is it your suggestion that I should sit here and never know what those trimmies are doing in the kitchen, or how they are cleaning out the bedrooms? I am sorry to have to ask you, but I would like to know in case of any mistake whether that is what you recommend.

'Quite so, Mr. Carmichael,' when Mrs. Grimond had learned the worst, 'it certainly was what you said, but I was hoping that you had meant something else; you are my minister and I have tried to give you such imperfect assistance as was in my power, and maybe I am not saying too much when I hold that I have helped you with your work. Perhaps I was expecting too much, but I regarded you as a friend, and one who would uphold my just position in all things according to reason; but I seem to have been mistaken, and I have received advice I never looked for from my own minister. It is you,' and

Mrs. Grimond let her indignation go, 'you a mere laddie born yesterday, and who knows nothing worth mentioning of life, that would tell me to condescend from my place and hand over the reins to those young things, who would send the house to rack and ruin in a month. And for myself, I suppose you would wish to see me creeping about the house or lying in my bed a dodderin' old body whose voice counts for nothing, and who might as well be dead. They will get my keys and everything the keys signify when I am in my coffin, and not an hour sooner.'

'You are a wonderful woman, Mrs. Grimond,' said Carmichael, making a strategic retreat, 'and you were born to be a queen. You may be sure I will never make any suggestion about the keys again; but there is one thing I would like to ask, and that is, who made that most becoming cap which you are wearing? For I never saw anything suit you better; the pink of the ribbons and

the blossom of your complexion exactly correspond.'

'Do ye think so?' and Mrs. Grimond's tone was gentle as a dove's. 'It's curious you should ask about the maker of the cap, and I suppose you're imaginin' that it came from the grand shops in Buchanan Street. Would you be astonished to know that it never saw the inside of a shop, and that I made every bit of it with my own hands? Without spectacles too, if you please,' and Mrs. Grimond smoothed her ruffled plumes and looked the picture of satisfaction.

'Without spectacles! If you didn't tell me I could not believe it, Mrs. Grimond'; and the sin of Carmichael was wiped out, and he departed with the smile of royal favour following him.

'He is young,' remarked Mrs. Grimond to her family afterwards, 'and has some foolish ideas, as young people have, but I will not deny that he has an obsairvin' eye.'

EUODIAS AND SYNTYCHE

IX

Euodias and Syntyche

THEIR friendship was of such long standing and was established on such a solid basis that every one would have said that it could never be broken, and its disruption was looked upon in St. Jude's as a catastrophe—something outside the laws of nature, like an earthquake or a thunderbolt. They had been brides of the same year and had made the rounds of dinners together that winter, sometimes one taking precedence, sometimes the other, with smiles and bows of perfect harmony.

Both were Scots women, Mrs. Wetherspoon from Perthshire, which Sir Walter considers

with justice the loveliest of all Scots counties, because there the Highlands and the Lowlands meet, and Mrs. Wetherspoon had some faint flavour of the Celt in her. She was one degree fierier and two degrees cleverer than her friend. Mrs. Livingstone was from Ayrshire, which has reared the dourest breed of folk in all Scotland, and is still prepared if necessary to lift testimonies or take covenants or do anything else to support the old and to oppose the new, and Mrs. Livingstone was a woman of strenuous affections and unconquerable determination.

They were both attractive in appearance, though in different ways, the one being pretty and the other handsome, and they had kept their good looks undiminished to middle age. Neither of them thought it inconsistent with the somewhat severe religion of St. Jude's to dress well or to take some little trouble about their clothes. Perhaps Mrs. Wetherspoon was a little more showy and was inclined to wear more conspicuous jewellery, while Mrs. Livingstone had a suggestion of magnificence about

her dress, and made up for the reserve in ornaments by the costliness of what she wore.

Their husbands were both natives of the city, and had known one another from the beginning of things. They had played together as children at the seaside, they had attended the same West End academy, they had gone as apprentices the same month, one into soft goods and the other into iron. In the same spring they had started business for themselves in their several lines, and since then they had kept step in prosperity. They had begun housekeeping upon the respectable scale of a sixty-pound rent, they had almost simultaneously moved to larger houses, and finally, one after the other, they had gone in to what were called in house-agent circulars "West End mansions."

Immediately after marriage both families had settled in St. Jude's, and through all changes of residence, and in spite of considerable distance, they had continued in the old Church, and indeed would have been miser-

able in any other. Within the Church sphere they had done their duty from the beginning generously and conscientiously, and had been rewarded by the esteem of the congregation and by just promotion. The men were appointed deacons at the same election; and if Mr. Livingstone was now an elder and Mr. Wetherspoon remained a deacon, this was not because the one had been distinguished and the other neglected, but because Mr. Wetherspoon had refused the office of elder and judged himself to be fit only for a deacon.

He was an excellent business man and an adept in Church finance, but he had no gift whatever for public prayer, and always used a manual at family worship, which was held to indicate either a certain want of spirituality or a difficulty in suitable expression; while Mr. Livingstone not only conducted worship without any aid and with much unction, but was able to make edifying references to the conversion of the Jews in his prayers, and to local events like the proposal to run tramcars

on the Sabbath, which went to show that he had a gift.

He could be depended upon to lead in prayer after the minister's address at the week-night service, and people going home would remark with admiration upon the skill with which he would sum up the main points of the address and even venture upon an application in his petitions. People in St. Jude's were critical listeners, and greatly appreciated the happy use of a Scripture expression or a felicitous allusion; and as Mr. Wetherspoon was not a competitor in this class and there was no room for jealousy, Mrs. Wetherspoon would congratulate Mrs. Livingstone with perfect sincerity and in the most gracious way upon her husband's talent for religious exercises.

There is a natural fitness in things, and any one with discernment could see that Mr. Livingstone was intended for an elder by a certain gravity of manner and a flavour of piety in speech, while Mr. Wetherspoon was

marked out for a deacon by a worldly shrewdness in getting in the seat-rents and a liberty in the colour of his ties. It was also understood that on occasion the Wetherspoons went to high-class play—say when Sir Henry Irving was in the city—although they did not allude to the matter in Church circles, while the Livingstones were opposed to the theatre in every shape and form, including pantomimes. They also steadily refused to give dances, and their daughters only learned that dangerous accomplishment under the guise of a class for calisthenics, where the girls performed wonderful motions with their arms for the first ten minutes, and then waltzed for the other fifty. Besides, although this may be pushing subtle distinctions too far, Mrs. Livingstone in her sombre grandeur gave one the idea of an elder's wife of the higher class, while Mrs. Wetherspoon, with her brighter colours, pointed rather to the more secular atmosphere of a deacon's court.

This specific difference extended to the views of the two ladies; for while Mrs. Livingstone had a profound respect for the doctrine of election, and liked from time to time to see a confident young minister to break his teeth upon it, Mrs. Wetherspoon was heard boldly to say that it was a secret past finding out, and that every man who preached on it made the darkness blacker; and while Mrs. Livingstone deplored the fact that with the growing laxity of modern theology the edifying doctrine of hell was hardly ever touched, and Mr. Carmichael did not seem to know the place existed, Mrs. Wetherspoon thought the less said upon that subject the better, and referred with a shiver to a famous sermon by Dr. McCluckie upon the solemn subject of future punishment, in which that distinguished divine used such freedom of speech that two ladies were carried out fainting.

Mrs. Wetherspoon, in irresponsible moments, declared that she would have no objection to a prayer-book if only to save the congregation

from the infliction of theological harangues in the place of petitions and the refutation of contemporary heresies; but Mrs. Livingstone felt it right to protest in private against a form of words which Carmichael used in praying for the Queen and the Royal Family, because it was in those subtle ways that the freedom of Presbyterian worship, for which her ancestors had been shot by Claverhouse, was undermined.

Those divergencies of opinion were, however, quite in the region of theory, and never caused any friction between the two excellent women, whose Church career had run parallel with that of their husbands. As young matrons, occupied with the cares of their family, they could not be expected to do arduous Church work, but they had both taken districts in which they distributed tracts at irregular intervals, and visited the homes where they received a welcome. They also assisted a number of poor people more or less injudiciously, and both had collected in their

time for the Sustentation Fund. When their children demanded less personal attention and they were richer in experience, they had entered the mothers' meeting, and by-and-by it passed into their joint control—Mrs. Livingstone reading religious books of sound doctrine and extremely vigorous application, while the mothers of the mission districts sewed garments which had been cut out by Mrs. Wetherspoon's clever hands.

There was a story that on one occasion when Mrs. Livingstone had a sore throat, which prevented her reading, Mrs. Wetherspoon, being left to the freedom of her own will and the frivolous taste of a deacon's wife, had read bits from Sir Walter to the women, which it is said they greatly enjoyed. This, however, was a lapse from the high standard of the meeting which was never repeated, because the next time Mrs. Livingstone was afflicted with hoarseness she resolutely attended the meeting, and read with her lips, if not with her voice, considering it better that the women should

hear nothing than that they should be led astray by vain fiction.

Mrs. Livingstone had long been president of the missionary society, and it was generally felt filled the chair with great dignity, while her friend was secretary and treasurer, and took good care that the business was quickly done and the money well husbanded. The ladies of St. Jude's would certainly have been jealous if any other two of their number had held so many offices and ruled so firmly, but they had come to look upon the two friends very much in the light of an hereditary monarchy whose representatives are separated by a gulf from the people, and with whom there is no competition in honour. They were at least an established institution and were recognised as the ordained female leaders of the community.

Personally, they were on such terms of easy and assured friendship that they did not feel it necessary to call in turn at one another's houses or to maintain an absolute equality in

dinner invitations, or to practise formalities of conversation when they met, or to make a point of compassing one another with observances. They generally spent Saturday afternoon together discussing the affairs of the commonwealth; they occasionally walked in the West End Park, although women are not given to constitutionals; they dropped into one another's houses at any hour if there was business to talk about, and they spoke to one another on their points of difference with great frankness. 'Grace,' Mrs. Livingstone would say, 'I'm astonished at you; you are little better than an Episcopalian.' And Mrs. Wetherspoon would occasionally take her friend boldly to task: 'That, Maria, is pure havers. You ought to have lived a hundred years ago.'

After these playful amenities they would take tea together with the greatest good-nature. It was an evidence of their close friendship that they called each other by their Christian names, for Scots people are not

given to reckless and easy-going familiarity. Mrs. Livingstone did occasionally address her husband as 'John,' but was never known to condescend to any pet name, and spoke of one lady, who referred to her husband as 'Jack,' as being Anglified. Mrs. Wetherspoon, with the greater freedom of her manners, called Wetherspoon not infrequently 'Sandie,' and Mrs. Livingstone, in the secrecy of her mind, would have respected Mr. Wetherspoon more if he had resented this indignity. His full name was reserved for a crisis, and if at any time Mrs. Wetherspoon, whose temper always secured her respect, said 'Alexander,' her husband knew that he must pay quick and close attention. In short, so intimate were the two ladies and so many were the bonds between them that they might have been called David and Jonathan if there had not been a disability of sex, besides the Scots hatred to every form of sentiment, even with the sanction of the Bible.

When it was whispered in St. Jude's that

the two friends had fallen out the idea was scouted by all knowing people, and the worthy woman who had dared, with bated breath, to hint at such an incredible incident suffered severely. By-and-by the whisper grew into a rumour and flew like wild-fire through the Church. It was felt as if the end of all things was at hand, and that if Mrs. Livingstone and Mrs. Wetherspoon had broken up their fast alliance, there was no security for the stability of any institution, and no guarantee for any one's character. The Confession of Faith might be abolished to-morrow, and Mr. Carmichael might be on the eve of joining the Roman Church. The whole fabric of things was shaken, and a general sense of insecurity spread through the commonwealth. It was the one subject of conversation in the various Church circles and generally ended in speculations regarding the cause of this unexpected and amazing breach.

As is usual in such cases, the suggestions, to any one who knew the people, were far

wide of the mark: That a servant had gone from one house to the other and carried some unfortunate story—as if either of those two high-spirited women cared one brass pin for anything a servant said! That Mrs. Livingstone had given herself airs as an elder's wife and refused to oblige Mrs. Wetherspoon with some information because it was session business and could not be told to the deacons —as if Mrs. Wetherspoon was concerned that her husband was not an elder, or wished for herself the awful and distasteful responsibility of an elder's wife! That Wetherspoon, in an adventurous moment, had stood for the town council and obtained a seat, and that Mrs. Livingstone felt that this might end in the Lord-Provostship, and place her friend at an unscalable height above her, while Mr. Livingstone had been simply besieged by deputations to contest a ward, and had declined because of the unspiritual character of town councillors, who certainly, as a class, were more given to feasting than to praying. That

Mrs. Wetherspoon had given a dance which had been freely spoken of in the West End for the excellence of the supper and the good looks of the young people, and that Mrs. Livingstone was consumed with envy, jealousy, and every evil work over this social success, while as a matter of fact she had scolded Mrs. Wetherspoon for this concession to worldliness, and had concluded by sending a lavish gift of flowers for the supper-table and coming round next day, under the pretence of speaking about the mothers' meeting, to receive a full and particular account of Mrs. Wetherspoon's function.

They were not women to break their covenant over trifles like servants' gossip and municipal politics; and indeed, save in one contingency, one could be certain that they would have stood together in prosperity and adversity, through the friction of different opinions and the details of Church work, to their lives' end. There is just one cause which will break up such a friendship, but it

will do so without delay. It does not matter who the women are, or how long they have known one another, or how loyal they have been to one another, or how many ties bind them together, or what mischief a rupture will do, their friendship will be shattered in an hour, if—do my readers say jealousy, and are they thinking of their husbands?

Nonsense! Mrs. Livingstone considered that Wetherspoon was a useful man in financial affairs and perfectly inoffensive in his manners, but she knew in no circumstances could she ever have married him, while Mrs. Wetherspoon had the most profound respect for Mr. Livingstone as a man and elder, but frequently offered thanks that she had not been tied to him as a wife. Mrs. Livingstone even allowed herself to complain of Wetherspoon because he had been so fidgety about auditing the accounts of the mothers' meeting, and Mrs. Wetherspoon joined with her friend against her husband; while Mrs. Wetherspoon had

hinted, not indistinctly, that Livingstone took an over-austere view of certain social matters, and yet did not strike a flash of fire from his wife. But there is one thing you may not do, unless you are to make a wreck of friendship perhaps for ever, and that is, pass the slightest reflection upon any child to its mother. She, of course, may speak very frankly about her children to her intimates, saying, 'Of course I know that Jessie is not pretty or Archie is not clever,' but another person could only offer such a remark at the peril of his life.

Both the ladies knew this as well as you and I; and while they had taken the most genuine interest in one another's families, they had practised the most careful reserve, not only in criticism but even in conversation. And Mrs. Wetherspoon to this day has never been able to explain to her husband or to herself how she made the great mistake of her good-natured and fairly tactful life. But upon her lay the blame of the offence,

although on Mrs. Livingstone lay the responsibility of a sustained and furious indignation. And this is the verbatim account of the brief dialogue which did all the mischief.

'By-the-way, Maria, a gentleman who took me in to dinner last night gave a glowing account of that new public school at Glenpattock. He says they have the most magnificent grounds and the best of air, and that it is the healthiest school in Scotland. They go in largely for sport, and many boys who are not very quick with their heads but good at games get on there splendidly, and he says that under that kind of training will turn out quite useful men. I thought I would mention the matter to you because the Academy has got such poor playing-fields, and your Harry is such a swell at games.'

'Harry has certainly distinguished himself in the sports, and I am told, although of course this may not be correct, that he's one of the best athletes or his age, but I do not know that he is what you would call stupid.

He is certainly not first in his class and he may not be quick, but many who go slowly go surely.' And there was a frost in Mrs. Livingstone's tone which chilled Mrs. Wetherspoon.

'Of course you know, Maria, that I didn't mean anything of that sort; Harry is a dear laddie and we are all so fond of him, and I've often heard Sandie say that he was sure he would turn out a good business man. I simply meant that an open-air school of that sort with lots of cricket and football would suit him to the ground.' And Mrs. Wetherspoon looked anxiously at her friend, and was alarmed to notice a slight hardening of the eyes, and a tightening of the mouth, and the faintest flush upon the cheek.

'What I understood you to say,' replied Mrs. Livingstone with increasing acerbity—'and I do not think that I am deaf, although of course I may not be clever any more than my son—was that the Glenpattock School, or whatever it is called, had been built for

lads who are too dull to get any good from other schools, a sort of home for the feeble-minded, and that immediately you heard of it you thought of my boy. If Mr. Livingstone and I had thought it necessary to send Harry to such an institution, I daresay we could have found one for ourselves.'

'How can you put such a meaning upon my words, Maria? As if I had spoken of your boy as feeble-minded! You will be saying next that I called Harry an idiot. You and I have been friends for a long time, and we have often had arguments, and I never knew you to be so unreasonable and unjust. But you surely do not mean what you are saying?'

'It was not I began the conversation, and I certainly would never dream of telling you where to send your boys to school, especially to places like Glenpattock. I suppose it's a kind of refuge, from the way you talk, or a reformatory. I may be unjust, though you are the first person who has called me so, and my boy may be an idiot, as you have

'MY BOY MAY BE AN IDIOT, AS YOU HAVE JUST HINTED.'

just hinted, but you will allow his father and myself to make the best arrangements we can for his education.' And although Mrs. Wetherspoon remained for half an hour and, as she described it figuratively to her husband, 'explained till I was breathless, and pleaded with her upon my bended knees,' Mrs. Livingstone was immovable, and the two friends parted in very strained relations.

Mrs. Wetherspoon had no sooner reached home than she wrote a letter of twelve pages, and mostly in one sentence, explaining that all she had done was through friendship; that she would never dream of calling Harry Livingstone any horrid name; that she had gone away most miserable; that she was sure she would cry all night; that she never thought her old friend would turn against her so suddenly; and that she hoped she would send her a line saying that the misunderstanding was over, and that they were as good friends as ever.

This might have been written on two

pages, and been quite intelligible. As it was repeated in various forms and in defiance of all the laws of grammar, with no punctuation, over twelve pages, it became almost incoherent but left the impresssion on Mrs. Livingstone's mind that Mrs. Wetherspoon had called Harry a number of horrid names, of which she could now remember several; and that when she, Mrs. Livingstone, had offered the most mild and courteous remonstrance that ever fell from a mother's lips, Mrs. Wetherspoon had accused her of ingratitude for their old friendship, and most unladylike language. So she answered in a brief note, and instead of writing 'Grace,' she wrote 'my dear Mrs. Wetherspoon.'

The other replied next morning, repeating all she had said before, and aggravating the offence by denying that she had used the word 'idiot,' and finished by showing the faintest trace of temper on her own account, as one who had been wilfully misunderstood and unkindly spoken to, and she began her

letter with 'my dear Mrs. Livingstone.' Mrs. Livingstone contented herself in her answer with eight pages, in which she referred to the language which Mrs. Wetherspoon had used about her son, and which she accepted as a deliberate insult. And with regard to the unkindness, she reminded Mrs. Wetherspoon that it was she who was responsible for the whole affair. This time she dropped 'my,' and confined herself to 'dear Mrs. Wetherspoon.'

That afternoon, and before Wetherspoon got home from his office, Mrs. Wetherspoon had sent a letter, this time only of six pages, in which she declared that she had never insulted any one in her life, and the last person she would have wished to insult was Mrs. Livingstone; that she had always considered that lady her friend, although in this she might now be mistaken; and that she had always appeared to get a welcome in Mrs. Livingstone's house, although she supposed now the wish

was father to the thought; and that in regard to the beginning of the quarrel, she was bound to say, although she did it with regret, that she regarded it as nothing but a piece of bad temper on the part of Mrs. Livingstone. This letter, of course, began 'dear Mrs. Livingstone.'

The reply was sent by messenger that evening in order that it might be digested in the night watches, and in face of a strong protest from Mr. Livingstone. It ran as follows: 'Mrs. Livingstone presents her compliments to Mrs. Wetherspoon, and declines to have any further correspondence with that lady.' And had not Wetherspoon exercised his authority for once, in a very determined fashion, a reply would have gone to Mrs. Livingstone, even though her household had to be roused to receive it that night, explaining that she not only did not wish to write to Mrs. Livingstone, but that she never wished to speak to her again. This final flight of letter-writing her husband

burked, but Mrs. Wetherspoon wept herself to sleep, and Wetherspoon knew that there was to be big, black trouble, not only for the women, but for their husbands.

Persons who cultivate a philosophical habit and argue about affairs as if they were seated in a diving-bell in the depths of the ocean, point out that a husband need not be involved in his wife's quarrel, if he does not approve of it, and that it is his duty to take up a neutral attitude. As if! Of course Livingstone and Wetherspoon were not only greatly vexed but in the secret of their hearts bitterly ashamed of their wives' explosion, and neither of them, always in the secret of their hearts, believed that there was any reasonable ground for the quarrel—men never do believe that about women's quarrels. Livingstone ventured to hint to his spouse that she surely had misunderstood Grace Wetherspoon, and his belief that in no circumstances would that good-natured woman call their boy an

idiot. But when the partner of his joys and sorrows retorted that the only other explanation was that she must be an idiot, he allowed the discussion to drop.

Wetherspoon, in the most conciliatory manner, put it to his helpmeet whether she had not got a little heated and allowed her temper to master her in the last chapter of the correspondence; but when his life companion asked him whether after all those years he was going to side with that termagant, Maria Livingstone, against his own wife, he made an abrupt retreat. When the men met in the city it was with an uneasy manner and a comic look of mutual sympathy. Neither dared to say a word which would commit himself or his wife, but the code on their faces being interpreted, ran thus: 'Those women! Of course there is no reason for all this uproar, but no words of ours can put out the flame. We are quite as good friends as ever, but we must stand each by his own wife; so let us pass with a nod instead of speaking and

assume a strained manner when we meet in company. But you and I, old man, are just the same friends as before. It is our little burden and we must shoulder it.'

Carmichael, with the dew of his youth still upon him and that confidence of wisdom which is the monopoly of persons under thirty years of age, took the settlement of the quarrel in hand, and went to deal with the two matrons, to the great amusement of his wife.

Both ladies received him with cold and careful courtesy, and both expressed their deep regret for the breach of friendship; both listened to Carmichael's account of the injury which the rupture of those two notabilities was causing in the Church life of St. Jude's with a consideration and polite regret which were very encouraging to the minister.

When, however, he reached the conclusion of the whole matter and pressed for a reconciliation, in which he was willing to be the mediator, Mrs. Livingstone explained that

as a Christian woman who would require forgiveness at the Judgment Day, she freely forgave Mrs. Wetherspoon, but that she never could again speak to a woman who had deliberately called her son an idiot. And Mrs. Wetherspoon explained to the minister that she had no grudge against Mrs. Livingstone and would always be willing to do her a good turn if she could, but that she would never willingly be in the same room with a woman who had knowingly perverted her words, and accused her of insulting her family.

Carmichael was not easily abashed, but after listening to his two parishioners, and after considering the form of their countenance, he went home to Kate a much humbler man. He learned in that day that it may be difficult to reconcile the will of the Deity with the freedom of the human will, but that it is much more difficult to make peace between two angry women, which was a very wholesome lesson for a callow young minister.

That is how the breach was made, but the healing thereof is another story.

Whether the quarrel between Mrs. Livingstone and Mrs. Wetherspoon could be considered a little fire, it was a great matter which it kindled in St. Jude's, and no department of the Church life was hid from the heat thereof. When it was known that the disruption was final, and that the two families—though of course that only meant the two women—were determined belligerents, it was necessary to readjust various Church arrangements. Mrs. Wetherspoon immediately resigned the secretaryship of the ladies' missionary society, but Mrs. Livingstone had anticipated her by retiring from the presidency, for both those devoted Christian workers felt it impossible to meet under the same roof; no room was now big enough to hold them together. Mr. Livingstone now absented himself from the deacons' court, in which as an elder he had a right to be present, and of course his real reason was that he had been accustomed to

sit next his old friend, and he did not care to take such a marked step as changing his seat; but he casually explained that he'd always thought it unfair, although quite constitutional, that elders should not only attend their own court, but also swamp the deacons in theirs.

The rota of office-bearers who stood behind the collection-plate at the church door on Sundays had to be changed, because those two excellent men had been assigned at their own wish to the same day, that they might have a friendly but subdued talk together while they stood like graven images at the receipt of custom. The one concern in appointing a committee used to be that the most suitable men were selected, but now it was most important that those two names should be kept separate.

It was customary in those days that a host and hostess gave two dinners in succession, for various practical reasons of meats and drinks and servants and such-like details, but the

arrangement had now a new convenience, because the Livingstones could be asked on the Thursday and the Wetherspoons on the Friday. A Gentile family who did not know what had happened within the Israel of St. Jude's included them both among the guests of one evening, and the things which happened are too painful to be related for family reading.

Both families timed their arrival at the church so that there might be no danger of meeting; but one morning there was a miscalculation in time, and the two ladies entered the vestibule at the same moment, with heads erect, seeing nothing but a distant imaginary landscape, while their shame-stricken and miserable husbands shambled in the rear. Parties were formed and pursued a guerilla warfare, one accusing Mrs. Wetherspoon of an insolence which no mother of a family could take at her hands, and the other describing the pride of Mrs. Livingstone as being beyond the endurance even of a

Christian martyr. Incidents were invented and phrases were coined and a rich and varied legend began to gather round the feud of the Livingstones and the Wetherspoons.

During all this time there were not two more unhappy women in the city; and although both matrons denied indignantly any desire for reconciliation, they would have given a considerable portion of their substance if things were with them as in the days of old.

When the breach became a fact Mrs. Livingstone treated it very seriously, as if it were a disagreement between two nations, and laid down laws for what might be called the humane conduct of the war. She explained to her husband that whatever might have happened between her and Grace Wetherspoon she had made up her mind that the conflict should be confined to themselves; for her part she would discuss the matter with no person, and would never mention Mrs. Wetherspoon's name either abroad or in the bosom of her

family, with the practical result that the long-suffering man heard the case reviewed every second night *in camera*. None of her friends were to be in any way influenced by this unfortunate misunderstanding between Mrs. Wetherspoon and herself; at the same time, she treated with marked coldness any one who showed the slightest sympathy with the other side.

Above all, the young people of the families must not be involved in this conflict of their mothers; but she was sure that Mrs. Wetherspoon would not wish to see any of the Livingstones in her house, or even allow any of the Wetherspoons to come to Mrs. Livingstone's house. There was a pretence of keeping the matter from the children; but they very soon got an inkling of it and put two and two together by that instinct, rather than an understanding, which is given to young people. The girls, I regret to say, entered into the situation with zest, and showed considerable skill in saying

disagreeable things and conveying by their manner a sense of just indignation, but the boys behaved in a characteristic, blundering, shameful fashion. They played their games in perfect good-fellowship and made joint visits to the tuck-shop with undiminished cordiality, and followed out any common quarrels with the most perfect loyalty, and the worst offender in this indifference to a family feud was the cause of it all, that unfortunate lad, Harry Livingstone.

When his sisters said spiteful things about the Wetherspoons, he called them 'cats,' and when they retorted that Mrs. Wetherspoon had called him an idiot, he said frankly that he believed it was a beastly cram, and then, with a fine want of logic, that if she did, he didn't care, for he had been called a lot worse names by his form master; that Mrs. Wetherspoon was the jolliest woman in the whole West End, and he didn't know any house where there were better teacakes, and that if any one could show him a better bat than the one she had

given him at his birthday last year, and with which he had run up a score of forty-two not out, in the inter-school match, he would go a long distance to see it. He even declared that the whole quarrel was disgusting tommy-rot, and that he wasn't going to give up the Wetherspoons for anybody.

With that extraordinary genius of boys for picking up the things in a sermon which they ought not to hear, and bringing them out at the most inconvenient season, Harry crowned all his iniquity by asking the assembled family one day whether Christians ought not to forgive one another, as Carmichael had been preaching for all he was worth that forenoon, and if they weren't going to forgive Mrs. Wetherspoon, how his sisters could have the impudence to repeat the Lord's Prayer? This unexpected outbreak of practical theology was felt to be intolerable, and, under the guidance of his wife's eye, Mr. Livingstone rebuked Harry for meddling with things which he did not understand, and told him plainly that, for a boy,

those easy allusions to the Lord's Prayer were nothing short of profanity, and must not be repeated at that table.

When his mother took him aside afterwards and told him how much she had been hurt by his words, and that she had always thought until that day that he loved her, Harry was absolutely confounded, and resolved to return to his old habit in church of paying no attention to sermons, as they were evidently beyond the comprehension of all persons under, say, thirty years of age, and occupying his mind with a review of the cricket matches of the season. Mrs. Livingstone felt, however, that there was no limit to the mischief which Harry, with his unnatural affection for Mrs. Wetherspoon and his heterodox ideas of Christian forgiveness, might not do; and when she found that at the spring holidays he was going to leave his family of white mice under the charge of a friendly servant at the Wetherspoons' house, she felt that as a Christian and a mother, and from the highest sense of duty, she must make a stand.

'Harry,' she said, 'in consequence of your conduct I must touch upon a matter which is very painful to me, and which I have tried to keep from the family. Mrs. Wetherspoon has acted in a way which I shall not describe, and which I never could have expected; while she continues in her present state of mind it is impossible for me to meet her, and I do not think it would be right. We cannot, you know, Harry, forgive any person unless he or she is penitent, and that is the reason why I am obliged to act in this way to Mrs. Wetherspoon. You will understand this better when you are older, Harry, and you must just believe that I have no alternative as a Christian, and that what I am doing is really for Mrs. Wetherspoon's own good. And so, Harry'—which was rather an abrupt descent from the high level on which she had been processing—'I must ask you not to take your mice to Mrs. Wetherspoon's.'

'All right, mother. I can't get the hang of things, and I suppose you know best. I can easily board out the beasties at some other

place; there are lots of chaps who are not going to the seaside just now, and they'll be jolly-well glad to have them.' But as Harry had promised to take the mice that evening to Mrs. Wetherspoon's, who was one of the few women not afraid of mice, and who used to allow them to run over her and to hide themselves in her sleeves, Harry, with some qualms of conscience, made a clandestine visit, and in a shamefaced manner explained the situation.

'Of course you must do what your mother tells you, Harry, and I don't know any boy who has a better mother. I'm awfully sorry about all this, but I only want to say to you that we feel just the same to you, and that we hope you'll have an A1 holiday.'

'I say, Mrs. Wetherspoon,' and Harry fumbled with his cap and grew very red in the face, 'I wish that I could—you know what I mean—but there isn't much a chap can do, but I want awfully——'

'I know what you mean, Harry, and when

the trouble's over no one will be so glad as you.' And Mrs. Wetherspoon would have kissed him, but that would have been offensive.

'I was so sorry, Sandie, for Harry Livingstone this evening,' when she told the incident. 'Whether he's clever or not, he is one of the decentest fellows, I am certain, in the whole academy; he is so honest and straight, and sensible and manly. But I'm afraid it will take older and wiser people than poor Harry to restore the past.' But it was Harry who did it, after all.

There were many theories about the outbreak of typhoid fever in the West End of the city that summer, and the newspapers gave the hospitality of their columns to every correspondent not hopelessly unintelligible or obviously insane. It was said to have been caused by the milk, which was brought from a farm where the sanitation was of that easy-going kind characteristic of rural homesteads last century; that it was the result of a

new drainage scheme, full of strange contrivances, and over which the parties in the council had hotly fought; that it had been brought to the city by rats from Germany, and afforded another instance of the folly of allowing such a free importation of foreign articles; that it could be traced to the excessive use of ice-cream made by Italians of uncleanly habits. There were other theories —thirty-seven in all—and fifteen resolutions were passed by various bodies more or less scientific; but our concern is with the fact that typhoid somehow or other broke out in a great many homes, and that one of the worst cases was that of Harry Livingstone. It is a slow and treacherous disease, and no one can say for a while how things are going; and then, when the patient is recovering, it can play such tricks and make such unexpected attacks that no one is certain whether he may not be taken off in the end.

As soon as it was known that Harry was down Mrs. Wetherspoon was anxious; but as

her wrath against Mrs. Livingstone was still burning fiercely, she did not dream of opening any direct communication, nor would she go the length of employing her husband as a scout. She knew just as well as Mrs. Livingstone that the two men were sick nigh unto death, and openly ashamed before the city of this feud, and she suspected that they saw one another from time to time and exchanged condolences; but there are things which a wise woman will not notice or mention. Mrs. Wetherspoon, therefore, established an elaborate intelligence department, and by means of the tradespeople, and by the occasional use of the servants, and by calling on friends who belonged to no party and lived in the neutral zone, and by questioning her own doctor, who was a neighbour of the Livingstones' doctor, she obtained daily bulletins, partially trustworthy, of Harry's condition. When through those varied and sometimes contradictory sources of information she learned that the case was serious, and that

as the crisis approached he seemed very weak, she determined on stronger steps, and made a new departure.

'Sandie,' she said suddenly to her husband one evening after dinner, 'Mrs. Govan, the greengrocer, told me that the Livingstones' cook had been in her shop this morning and gave a bad account of poor Harry. The fever has been very severe, and the doctors take an anxious view of the case. Could you manage to come across Mr. Livingstone to-morrow and get the real truth from him? After our own laddies there's no boy in the city I like so much as Harry Livingstone, and I can't forget that evening when he came here and said he wanted to make up the quarrel. I will not on any account write to Mrs. Livingstone, in case she should say I had insulted her again, and I will not send to the house, for I suppose that would not be acceptable. But I want you to find out how it goes with Harry.'

From that time Wetherspoon went openly

twice a day to Livingstone's office, in the morning when Livingstone had arrived from home, and in the afternoon when information had come down, to inquire for Harry. There is not much passes between men, for in their times of trouble they are almost inarticulate; but as the reports grew darker there was no mistake about the concern on the visitor's face, and one afternoon he shook hands with Livingstone as he was leaving and murmured incoherently: 'Well, must be going. Fine lad, Harry; all love him at our house. The wife is very anxious. Wonder how long this hot weather will continue. Please God he will recover.' Which was not very grammatical, and rather irrelevant, but quite sufficient.

'Thank you, Wetherspoon—very friendly calling this way. Mrs. Wetherspoon always fond of Harry. The country's needing rain. More news about three o'clock.' Which was also rather confused but quite sufficient—for two male animals.

When Wetherspoon brought home this

ominous report and gave an impressionist sketch of Livingstone's unconcealed anxiety, Mrs. Wetherspoon broke one of the resolutions which she had laid down with great firmness, and that evening a housemaid went to the Livingstones to inquire for Harry. She was instructed to give no name and no information, but to obtain as particular an account as she could how it fared with the lad at the close of the day. It was the parlourmaid who was sent next morning with the same safeguards, so that no one in the opposite camp might know whence those spies had come, and in the evening the cook took up the duty.

For three days Mrs. Wetherspoon's own personal scouts brought her word morning, noon, and night, while in the evening her husband reinforced her with news from Livingstone's own lips. No one outside the Livingstones' house could have been more distressed or more eager for intelligence. And when on the fourth day the reports were gloomy

in the extreme, and Wetherspoon declared his belief, from what he had heard from the father and the sight of his face, that Harry was dying, his wife, after a brave show of composure, gave up dinner, and could not conceal her distress.

In any circumstances she would have keenly felt the situation, for Harry had always been a great favourite with her; but it doubled her regret that it was this lad, whom she thought so much of, that she was supposed to have called by an opprobrious name; and now, if the report be true, he was dying. He was such a good-looking, modest, unaffected, civil lad, who had always played the game and always did the right thing; he had come so often to the house, bringing his mice and other pets; he had always joined her on the cricket-field when his side were in, and chatted with her; he had often stayed with them at the seaside, and gone excursions with them. To think of it, that over Harry they had stormed, and that he had tried to

be the healer of the quarrel! And now he was battling for his life, and it would not matter to him soon what he was called, or how they quarrelled, for his little share of life would be done.

The pathos of it came over Mrs. Wetherspoon, who had something of the Celt's quick and impulsive nature, and she rose suddenly as if a thought had stung her, and left the room to break her word for the second time. Putting on a hat which she wore at the seaside, and an old shawl, she hurried like one to whom every minute is precious, down their terrace and round the corner, and up the terrace behind, till she came to the Livingstones' door.

Standing in the street, she looked up at the house, every room of which she knew, and identified the bedroom where Harry was lying. She construed the scene within—the wasted form, the pinched, unconscious face, the faint moaning, the constant restlessness, the nurse and mother by the bed, the father going out

and in, the family in the rooms below speaking in whispers, learning their lessons for a few minutes and then giving them up, moving about here and there. For a moment she hesitated, and then she mounted the steps and gently rang the bell. The servant who opened the door, a sympathetic West Highlander whom she knew, recognised her, and at the sight of Mrs. Wetherspoon, through the conflict of various emotions, began to weep.

'How is Harry?' asked Mrs. Wetherspoon without preliminaries, for other things were beginning to be forgotten. 'Is he still alive?'

'He iss breathing, and that is all they will be telling me. Ochone, but he wass a fine-made lad, and good at the games, and a pleasant tongue he had to man and woman. And it wass you, Mrs. Wetherspoon, that loved him well.'

'Do not say, Morag, that I was here, for there are reasons why I do not want it known, but I could not rest till I knew for

myself how it went with Harry. May God spare the laddie, for there are many who love him!' And Mrs. Wetherspoon departed swiftly.

As it happened, while they were speaking together Mrs. Livingstone, who had been in the dining-room endeavouring to get what comfort she could from the doctor, crossed the hall and caught the sound of her former friend's voice. She did not hear what she was saying, but she marked that there was, as it were, the sound of tears in her words, and when the door closed she turned into the drawing-room whose window commanded the terrace, for she knew that if it was Mrs. Wetherspoon she would come that way. Below the window Mrs. Wetherspoon had halted for a moment, because—there was no doubt of it—she was weeping.

During Harry's illness his mother had passed through many moods. First she was angrier at the thought of how he had been spoken of; then she grew indifferent to every-

thing that had happened as her whole mind was concentrated on her boy's condition; and latterly, as the shadow of death seemed to be settling upon his face, her heart, full of tenderness towards him, embraced all his friends, and began to grow soft even towards Grace Wetherspoon. Livingstone had not failed to tell how anxious Wetherspoon was, and it had come also to the mother's ears that many indirect inquiries had been made. The errands of the servants had not been perfectly concealed, and now Grace herself had swallowed her pride and forgotten her anger, and at this late hour was inquiring in person for the lad, and was broken by the bad news. When Mrs. Livingstone went upstairs and prayed that it might be God's will to spare her son, she did so with a more Christian heart than for a year past.

Early next morning, before nine o'clock, Mrs. Wetherspoon was again at the door. When she was told that Harry had taken a turn for the better through the night, and

that the doctors who had just left held out hope that he might live, she wept for the second time outside the Livingstones' door, but now for joy and not for sorrow. And somehow, whoever was to blame, this came by-and-by also to Mrs. Livingstone's ears.

When a strong and clean-blooded lad like Livingstone gets the turn, he makes quick work of his recovery. Four weeks from that time, having grown in strength every day, and having been seasoned by certain drives with his delighted mother, he announced his intention of going out for a walk in the sun along the terrace. And his mother, knowing the ways of boys, and that nothing would please him better than making his own little excursion, charged him not to go far, and to go slowly and to keep in the sun, and to come home within fifteen minutes. She watched him make his cautious way along the terrace, and then with the adventurousness of boys, turn round the corner and disappear from her sight. No doubt he

was going to make the circle of the terrace behind, which happened to be where the Wetherspoons lived, and to return the other way; but when the fifteen minutes became twenty, his mother grew nervous, and when they reached half an hour she went out in search of him.

When he was to be found neither on his own terrace nor on the Wetherspoons', she knew not what to make of it, till a strange idea struck her. He had his own ways and his own thoughts, as boys have; for there is more sentiment in a boy, though he conceals it in the depths of his soul, than in seventeen girls, though they proclaim it to the heavens. She would not make a mistake for the world, but she must find where he was, and it was worth trying. Mrs. Livingstone came slowly down the other terrace, and while she seemed to be admiring the garden in front of the houses, she was really examining one particular house, especially the bow-window of the drawing-room, for some

sign of her boy. And there, in the blaze of the sun, at ease upon a couch in the circle of the window, and looking out at her with bold, brazen face, as if he were in the most natural place in the world, and doing exactly what he might have been expected to do, was her prodigal son.

Six seconds later—Harry declared that Mrs. Wetherspoon was the best sprinter he had ever seen—the door opened, and Mrs. Wetherspoon cried, with exulting voice:

'Harry is here, Maria, and looking amazingly well. He was wondering when you would turn up to walk him home, for he was certain you would guess his whereabouts. Wasn't it sweet of him to make his first visit to our house!' By this time they were in the room, and Harry was explaining.

'You see, mother, you told me how Mrs. Wetherspoon had come herself to ask for me, ever so many times a day, and I thought you would like me to shuffle round and thank her when I got on the war-path

'GRACE,' SAID MRS. LIVINGSTONE, 'CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?'

again, and we were just waiting tea till you turned up.'

'Grace,' said Mrs. Livingstone, 'can you ever forgive me?'

'It's you, Maria, who must forgive me.' They were both beginning to cry, and they might have said a lot of foolish things, but Harry, who had been looking out at the window for a minute, suddenly turned:

'I don't know how you people are, but I'm beastly hungry; and I say, mother, I don't believe that dear old ass of a doctor would refuse me a whack of Mrs. Wetherspoon's chocolate-cake.'

And that was how the breach was healed.

HER MARRIAGE DAY

X

Her Marriage Day

TELEGRAMS from China in those days of revolution and anarchy were short and confused, and as often as not contradictory and unintelligible. Although the name of Agnes Durham had appeared in the first list of Christian martyrs, Carmichael, with his incurable optimism, had refused to accept the news as final, and found fifty cogent reasons for hope. Had she not gone out only two years ago in the freshness of her young womanhood to serve as a nurse in the mission, and could it be in the will of Providence to close her career so untimely? The mission had never been

attacked before, and did such excellent work for the sick of that most needy city, Chew-whang, that even the most fanatical of anti-Christians must have been grateful and had a goodwill towards the hospital.

Were not the missionaries under the protection of the English power, if not under the cover of the English flag, and would any one dare insult the majesty of Great Britain by doing to death her unoffending citizens? As for the rumours, they were only the offspring of a troubled time, the flying dust stirred up by the wild movements of the insurrection, or they were the reckless invention of an unscrupulous and low-class Press, which was willing to make money out of tortured minds and broken hearts. He was absolutely certain that the mission and all within the walls were as safe as St. Jude's Church and its congregation, and he was personally looking for a letter from Agnes, giving them picturesque accounts of the riot and their escape,

and all the wonderful things she had seen, and all the service she had rendered to sick and wounded men.

Carmichael even allowed his fancy to play round the event, and imagined the mission protected from the mob by devoted Chinamen, who were grateful for past help, and said they would rather die than allow a hair of the missionaries' heads to be touched. One afternoon, as he paced his study and gave the reins to his Celtic enthusiasm, he already beheld in vision the people of Chew-whang, touched to the heart by the courage and charity of the mission, coming into the Christian Church by the thousand together. In all this a large share of the glory was assigned to the young woman who had suddenly broken the even tenor of her life and devoted herself to the high enterprise of the Church in the regions beyond, and was the only representative of St. Jude's in the foreign field.

The minister used to complete his romance

by bringing Agnes home for furlough after the trying experiences of the rebellion, and arranging a welcome meeting at St. Jude's which was to exceed anything ever known in the history of that distinguished Church for the magnificence of the attendance and the wildness of the enthusiasm. And then Agnes would by-and-by return to China with a band of young women who had caught the infection of her spirit and given the last pledge of devotion to the Cross of Christ. It would be an epoch in missions.

As the mists roll off the mountain-side, so were Carmichael's day-dreams dispelled, and he had been forced to face the facts. Long ago it had been placed beyond doubt that the lonely mission premises had been sacked by the Boxers, and the helpless little band of missionaries, men and women, put to death. They had held a memorial service at St. Jude's and had returned thanks for the triumphant death of the martyrs with such a lift of heart that some of the

sect of the Pharisees, such as Simeon MacQuittrick, had declared that it was little better than praying for the dead; and Carmichael had so magnified the ruby crown of martyrdom that, although no one present offered there and then to go out to China, several men who were trying to do good work in their own city did it more bravely for years to come.

The congregation commemorated her death by a painted window, so that every worshipper in St. Jude's, when he lifted his eyes towards the pulpit, could see her gentle and spiritual face as she walked in white, following her Lord in the higher ministry; and Mr. Murchieson, who had a little earlier obtained salvation through the service of little children, recanted all his prejudices against foreign missions and erected at his own cost a hospital to the glory of God and the memory of Agnes Durham in the city of Chew-whang, while a new standard of unselfishnesss and heroism was unconsciously

set to the body of the people. Her years were not many and her work was not long, and it seemed a tragedy that a young life full of promise should have been so cruelly closed. But every life must be judged by the long result, and one who dies at twenty-five may have wrought greater works than one who has lived to three-score years and ten. There was another expression upon the faces of her father and mother, and a new flavour of unworldliness in their lives; one of her brothers entered the ministry and another has given richly of his time and substance to social work. One sister is a missionary's wife in Africa, and another is the head of a settlement in London, and all these things have come to pass because she loved not her life unto the death, but laid it down for His dear sake and for suffering women.

The letter from the English Consul containing the information he collected when he returned to the city lies upon Carmichael's desk, and he is reading again certain sentences

which are engraven, not on his memory, but on his heart to this day:

'The mission staff, according to the testimony of reliable witnesses, behaved with remarkable heroism, and showed a spirit of self-abnegation which is beyond words. . . . As soon as the danger was realised they had removed the children from the school and as many of the sick as could leave their beds to a place of safety in the country. . . . The doctor and two nurses remained with the patients, mostly women who could not be moved. When the rioters forced the gates of the mission the three missionaries presented themselves in order to divert attention from the hospital ward, where the sick were lying. . . :

'They were offered the choice of denying their religion and blaspheming the name of Jesus or instant death. According to the account which was corroborated by certain of the Boxers themselves, they began to sing, "Jesus, Master, Whose I am," and they had

not finished the first verse before they were all beheaded. . . . One of the ladies, who had been identified as Miss Durham, was heard to cry "Lord Jesus!" with an exceedingly sweet voice, and one looking on described her face as that of a bride on her marriage day. . . .

'These details I have collected from trustworthy sources, and have sent home, because they may be of comfort to the friends of those who fell, and they bear testimony to the unshaken courage and remarkable devotion of the missionaries. . . . It is satisfactory to add that the Boxers were contented with the murder of the staff, and did not seek for the patients, so that the doctor and the two nurses accomplished their end and saved the lives of those committed to their charge.'

'Her marriage day'—and, as he read those words again, the scene of martyr romance with the little Christian citadel, rich in Christ's treasure of the sick, and the brave garrison of Christ's three servants, and the raging, merci-

less, brutal enemy, and the last song to the honour of Jesus before His soldiers sealed their testimony with their blood, and the figure of their own martyr waiting for the Bridegroom, faded in its spiritual and dazzling glory from before Carmichael's mind, and he recalled another scene which now would be its companion, as in years to come he thought of Agnes Durham. From the beginning of his ministry at St. Jude's he had known and respected her, and had seen more of her than almost any other of the young women who worked in the Church. He had come to regard her as a model of Christian character and unselfish service, and indeed he was accustomed to mention her to his wife as an instance of sinless perfection, which had never been a fault with Kate Carmichael, and even in lighter moments to hint that if it had been the will of an inscrutable Providence to have given him Agnes Durham for a helpmeet, there is no saying to what heights of usefulness and sanctity he might have risen.

Kate admired Agnes as much as her husband did, and was not at all moved by those speculative rearrangements, for she used to point out that Carmichael, being a man of varied tastes and wayward impulses, and being as yet only in the early processes of sanctification, would have been sick tired of Agnes Durham in a month. Carmichael was ready to admit the force of this remark, for he admired Agnes as a saint rather than as a woman, and it is the women and not the saints who are more perfectly suited for married life. No one had ever called her beautiful, or even said she was pretty. People used to say, as they generally do in such cases, that she had a sweet expression, and there were certainly moments when the soul within lent an engaging comeliness to the face. It would have been a satire to describe her as clever or brilliant, and she herself would have smiled at the idea; for, if the truth be told, Agnes was slow of mind and even puzzle-headed, so that she had difficulty in getting a

hold of things, and she was as absolutely destitute of humour as the table. There was nothing distinguished about her except that she had a neat figure and good manners, white teeth, and a pleasant smile, and, it should be added, brown eyes of dog-like faithfulness.

What does it matter now that she seemed commonplace, and that she was uninteresting to bright people, so that she had fallen into the habit of silence in company, and had grown afraid of those wonderful folk who never open their mouths without dropping an epigram, and never refer to the weather without originality. One may even grant that she had the defects of her excellent qualities —that she was a trifle demure and prudish, that she was apt to treat young men as if they were ever on the verge of a proposal, and that her rules of propriety approached absurdity. Carmichael had once been angry with her when at a guild meeting in St. Jude's he had introduced two country lads—recent arrivals—and left them with her as in good

company, to find on his return one of them sitting looking east, and the other looking west, while Agnes Durham in the centre looked north, and all three were bound and held in unbroken and awful silence.

There are old maids by force of circumstances, and there are those who, as Mrs. Gamp would say, that close observer of life and profound philosopher, 'are born sich,' and Agnes Durham, every one would have agreed, was 'born sich.' There are things you can believe may happen, and things which you cannot believe, and only the most riotous and topsy-turvy mind could imagine any one making love or proposing to Agnes Durham, or Agnes being married and the mother of a family. She had a distaste for men unless they were cripples who required to be nursed, or elderly gentlemen with white hair, who said, 'Eh! what, my dear, eh!' With male persons of this harmless character she allowed herself freedom of speech, and might even have exchanged a mild jest; towards young

LEFT TWO COUNTRY LADS WITH HER FOR COMPANY.

and able-bodied men she maintained a cold and dignified reserve, and they escaped from her presence as from the chilling temperature of a mausoleum.

Carmichael held that the religious calling of women was not confined to the Roman Church, but that there was such work for Protestants also, and to all appearance this was the nature and lot of Agnes Durham. She would wait upon her father and mother with the utmost docility and devotion till they died; she would then keep house for a bachelor brother, and serve him hand and foot till, in some mad moment, which Agnes could never account for, he married some perfectly unsuitable person; she would then go and take care of some frail and bad-tempered distant relative till a merciful Providence removed her, and then she would join with another maiden lady of corresponding history and tastes, and they would set up house together with a very prim servant of uncertain age, a pug, and a parrot. The two excellent women

would spend their whole time in visiting the poor, distributing tracts, collecting for charities, sewing for Dorcas societies, attending missionary meetings, and doing the inglorious work on committees.

This Carmichael would have said five years ago would have been her programme, and through it all she would have been always modest, gracious, good-natured, charitable, and maddeningly correct and conscientious. We have all got complete character portraits of people we know upon the walls of our mind, and are not averse from taking friends round and letting them see this and that person. One day we get a great surprise, for we find that, after all, we knew only the face, and did not even guess the heart, and that the person whom, as we thought, we could read as a book was something very different and unexpected.

When Miss Durham entered Carmichael's study one forenoon he was delighted as usual to see her, for he had no surer ally and he made little doubt about her errand. It would

be to ask whether a certain harmless tale was quite suitable for the young women's guild, or whether if a family in the mission district did not wish tracts she ought to leave them on the table, or what was the meaning of an obscure verse in some minor prophet which she had come across in her reading, or what was one's duty when your family asked you to make a fourth in a game of whist. Carmichael was not a patient man, nor very sympathetic towards scrupulosity; but she was so sincere and unselfish, and lived so entirely for the highest ends, that he was ever at her service, and he made a hasty calculation how long he could give her and how pleasant he could be to her.

'You may be sure, Miss Durham, that I am always only too glad to see you, and to talk about your work. Please tell me wherein I can help you, for you have a right, if any person in St. Jude's has, to the good offices of your minister.'

'It isn't about my work but about myself

that I have come to-day. I have been wishing to call for the last month about this matter; three times I have been at your door and turned back, and it was only after lying awake last night and praying for guidance that I have mustered courage to visit you this morning.' A new note in the voice startled Carmichael, and he noticed also an indefinable difference in manner. He looked at her curiously and waited for further speech.

'I know, Mr. Carmichael,' she went on after a little pause, 'that whatever I say to you will be confidential, and that it will never pass from you to any other person. I am quite sure of this else I would not have come to-day. You are a Christian minister and a gentleman, so I do not ask your promise.' Whatever the circumstances were, Carmichael began to see they must be serious, for they had invested her with a certain intensity and anxiety which had never before appeared in this placid and conventional nature.

'You know me well enough, Miss Durham, to trust me utterly. Do not hesitate to open your heart and to tell me your trouble, if trouble it be.' And Carmichael glanced keenly at her, for he felt as if he were leaving an inland lake and putting out to sea—a sea for which he had no chart.

'It would be very hard, Mr. Carmichael,' she said in a low but firm voice, 'if I had to confess some sin of which you never would have suspected me. It is, I think, still more difficult to speak to you about something else you never could imagine.' Her face flushed hotly and then paled again, her eyes grew soft and tender, so that for the first time Carmichael thought her pretty, and at her expression he started inwardly and wondered. He had seen the same look when a girl came to announce her engagement.

'It is not easy to find words,' and she came nearer to Carmichael and unconsciously laid hold upon the sleeve of his coat.

'People have always supposed, I know,

that I disliked all men—except, of course, my own people—and I have always felt that men did not want to be with me, because I have not got the ways of young women, and cannot make myself agreeable, and because I am not good-looking. But though our faces be different, every woman's heart is the same.' She could go no further, but looked wistfully at the minister to see if he understood. And Carmichael did.

He had ever held—and it was not the least part of his small store of wisdom in those early years—that every woman was made to love, and in loving fulfilled herself; that the ideal state for a woman was marriage, and that to marriage she was justified in looking as a goal of life. He had also cherished in his heart the belief that those dear old maids whose faces were like withered roses had had their love affairs, which had been love tragedies, and that somewhere in their desk and in some secret drawer there was a photograph and a packet of faded

letters. Never had he laughed at love-sickness or treated marriage lightly; even in his inexperience he had found that this was the strongest passion of life, and that many a man and woman had been wrecked or had been saved in body and soul by love. He blamed himself that if he had made any exception it was for such a one as Agnes Durham, and now he was to find that this timid and virginal soul had also her love story.

'Yes, Miss Durham,' said the minister with much gentleness, 'I think that I know, and if it be as I suppose, I am glad. You have won the prize of life, which is love.'

'If it were the will of God, I should be the happiest and most fortunate woman in this city. But I have nothing to tell; that is my misery, I cannot be sure. I love him, but he has said nothing, and perhaps he does not love me.' And Miss Durham was now twisting her gloves in her hands and trembling so much that Carmichael compelled her to sit down, and for a minute looked towards the

window, as his way was when people were regaining themselves.

'You wonder why I came to you and what you can do for me. It is not a matter in which, as a rule, a stranger can meddle. I have not spoken to my mother, and it would be of no use. I know no one to whom to go except yourself, and I cannot endure this uncertainty any longer. It is disturbing my life and hindering my work; it may soon break my health. Will you help me?'

'To the utmost of my power and sympathy,' replied Carmichael; 'but what can I do? Do I know the man, and may I ask his name?'

'No one knows him so well, and you are understood to be his most intimate friend. You are often together, and every one says that you have no secrets from one another. You guess now whom I mean,' said Miss Durham, with a trembling voice, for this revelation is an awful strain upon a woman's innate delicacy and self-respect.

'Pardon me if I am making a mistake, for this conversation has taken me aback, but can it be Professor Redgrave?' And Agnes's super-sensitive ear caught the accent of astonishment and hopelessness in Carmichael's voice. 'No,' he said, after she had given a gesture of assent, 'I never could have guessed.'

The pity of it struck Carmichael in an instant, and he would have given a year of his ministry to save this sensitive and deep-hearted girl what he began to realise would be the chief agony of her life. What was the meaning of it, or was there any reason at all behind things, that this girl, with her homely face and retiring ways, should have fallen in love with Redgrave?

If she was not the plainest girl in the city—and certainly she was not that—there was no question he was the handsomest and most brilliant personality. With his perfect Greek face, his flashing eyes, his rich olive complexion, his fascinating smile, his eternal

gaiety, his ready wit, his faultless manners and equally faultless dress, his innumerable accomplishments, he was the glory of the University and the pet of the West End. He was welcome everywhere, and he was courteous to all. He seemed to know everything besides his own subject, and he always said the right thing. Never was such an 'Admirable Crichton' seen in a gray Scots city, where, indeed, he appeared like a bird of paradise. It was a general jest that every second young woman was in love with him; but while he was agreeable to all women, he was secretly indifferent.

Carmichael was convinced that he would never marry, but that if he did so it would be grandly. As for poor Agnes Durham! Carmichael walked to the window, as was his way in the critical moments of an interview, and he could have wept, or laughed, it was so absurd; it was also so lamentable. A woman of sensitive nature and morbid self-respect does not unveil her melting heart in

any man's sight, except in desperate straits, and the only consolation for her torture is the fulfilment of her desire. Carmichael turned, and his heart failed him as he looked at Agnes. She was still standing waiting for his word, and she read the answer in his face.

'I understand—please say nothing. He took me in to dinner once, and I have met him other times, not often. He called one afternoon and sat for some time. I attended his philosophy class for ladies, and he was so kind about an essay I wrote, and pointed out the mistakes in style. It was the way he spoke and looked at me. But I suppose it was my own imagination, and the love is all my own. You will not laugh at me, nor think this a young girl's fancy. I am not young and have no fancies. This is my only love story, and it is closed.'

'You do not know; perhaps in days to come——'

'I am certain—never before and never

again; it is not God's will for me, and my calling is not an earthly marriage.'

Now the will of God was plain, and the heart of Agnes Durham, deep and true, which would have been a priceless treasure for the best of men, was for ever satisfied where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of GOD.

THE END.

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